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COVER: CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954)  
by Ted A. Bohus and Bill Chancellor



# Scarlet Letters



What a great issue! (*Scarlet Street* #45) Your greatest issue ever! And there is one reason for that and that is because there was an interview with me. I loved reading the interview with me in *Scarlet Street* #45 because it was all about me. There aren't nearly enough interviews about me, but you've gone a long way in fixing that problem, you *Scarlet Street* people. I was also pleased as punch with Mr. Anthony Dale's review of the DVD of my film *THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL*, but don't you think there should have just been one or two more articles about me? Now, about your purported Gay Agenda—if you want these vile rumors to abate, you really must stop doing articles like the one on Ellery Queen. Next you'll be doing an article on the Friends of Dorothy (McGuire, of course). In any case, congratulations on a splendid issue. Have I mentioned that I especially enjoyed the interview with me?

Bruce Kimmel  
Studio City, CA  
[www.haineshisway.com](http://www.haineshisway.com)

With one of the best *Scarlet Street* covers ever, #45 again proves that the Street just gets redder and redder! The use of color was very fine, certainly showcasing the wonderful reproduction of covers highlighting the account of pulp mags.

I love opening *Scarlet Street* and finding a letter from Richard Gordon. I've enjoyed his films so much over the years and his comments always reveal the depth of knowledge only a life lived in the arts can provide. His memory is simply amazing and a real treasure.

So many treats this issue: Frankie Thomas on the letters page ("Wanted: More Space Cadets Like..." was as funny as "Wanted: More Bullies Like..." for Tommy Bond), more Christopher Lee, the elusive Mr. Towers, and the wonderful Ellery Queen/Nero Wolfe material, now memorializing a good series gone too soon. And then there was the mention of Dr. Mabuse, another perfect subject for the Street.

Nice to know from Ron Morgan's review of *13 GHOSTS* that it's available on DVD in its original version, featuring the silly but fun "Illusion-O." I loved the days of the William Castle gimmicks. (I was once at an audition seated between the then little-known John Goodman and Baltimore's D.W. Griffith, John Waters. I knew Waters was a collector and we started comparing our trinket collections. He wanted my Lon Chaney *WITCH-CRAFT* coin and I almost traded him for a ZOTZ one. When I mentioned that I had my original "Illusion-O" viewer, he calmly trumped me by saying he had an unbroken box with a gross of them! They'd been given to him by a Baltimore projectionist who found he still had this me-

mento from years gone by.) I was surprised tuning into Harry Alan Tower's *TEN LITTLE INDIANS* several years on Cinemax to see that they had removed the William Castle-like "fright-break." One Halloween, I was showing *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* and rigged up a small skeleton behind the television on a wire to be unveiled at the right moment, like Castle's original "Emergo."

John F. Black's review of *HOMICIDAL* was nicely presented. His consideration of fans who might not yet know the surprise ending by offering a caveat was on the money. No spoilers here! Erich Kuersten's review of *FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER* was surprisingly missing any mention of John Ashley, one of the film's stars. (It was his first leading role, I believe, still featuring his thick Oklahoma accent). I've always thought *Scarlet Street* should "come to his rescue" and do some coverage, since he worked in a lot of genres popular with Streeters. After years in juvenile delinquent and beach party flicks, and then his tenure with Eddie Romero in the Philippines producing monster movies, he produced the excellent *WEREWOLF* television series. After so many years in so many areas of show business, it was sad that his death came and went with no coverage in the press. *THE DEEP END* (which didn't play such "provinces" as Toledo) looks very interesting and I would love to read more about it. Like to see it, for that matter!

## WANTED! MORE KETTLES LIKE...



Lori Nelson

I really enjoy the message boards at the *Scarlet Street* Forum. It's nice to encounter your writers in casual conversations and get to know them and their tastes and differences. The ongoing critique of Nicole Kidman and *MOULIN ROUGE* and the differences in taste between Messrs. Hanke and Valley is quite amusing, and that same fun badinage inhabits many of the alleys of *Scarlet Street's* website. I heartily recommend it to all your readers. The online DVD reviews are a fine service, easily checked before that visit to the video store. Ah, to be in touch so easily with others of like mind, who love and appreciate the glories of our cultural heritage, is a real joy. As Our Boris would say, "Full marks!"

Farnham Scott  
Temperance, MI

Thanx, Farnham! The last time someone said we get redder and redder, we were being accused of Communism! For those *Scarlet Streeters* who want to get in on the website fun, you'll find us at [www.scarletstreet.com](http://www.scarletstreet.com).

Received the new issue while I was away in Manchester. Just having a look through its pages, I worried about the "Harry Alan Towers" picture on page 45. Can it be that it doesn't show Towers at all, but, of all people, Jess Franco?

Uwe Sommerlad  
Frankfort Am Main, Hessen, Germany  
Yes, that seems to be the case. Apologies to Mr. Towers; we were led astray by the fact that Franco wasn't holding a zoom lens in his lap.

Great cover! I enjoyed its uniqueness. First thing I did was jump to the concluding Christopher Lee interview. It is so interesting to read how he felt about certain parts he played and the movies he was in; I could just hear him speak as I savored every word. Truly, there's no one left that comes close to filling his shoes. (Of course, I enjoyed the concluding coverage of the *Fu Manchu* entries as well.)

As always, I liked *THE NEWS HOUND*, *SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN*, and *BOOK ENDS*. I really appreciate being kept up on the latest of what is going on out there in the field of the fantastic. Always a highlight!

The surprise of the issue for me? Well, it was *ALL SINGING! ALL DANCING! ALL NUDIE!* I found myself drawn into the real story behind *THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL*. I have some memories of it back in the seventies, but never thought it had such an

Continued on page 8



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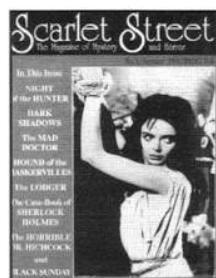




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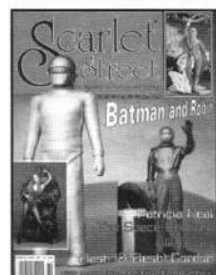
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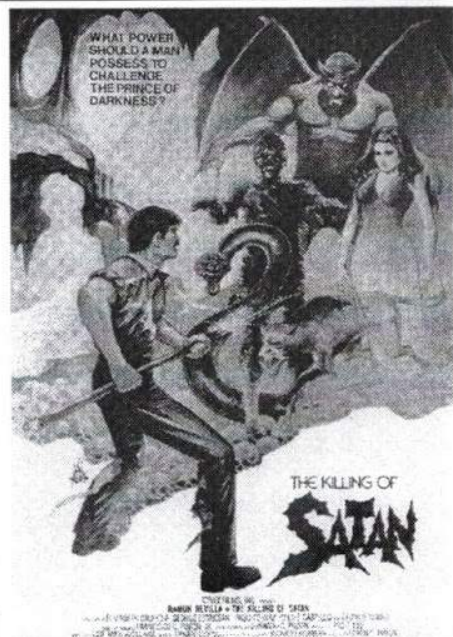
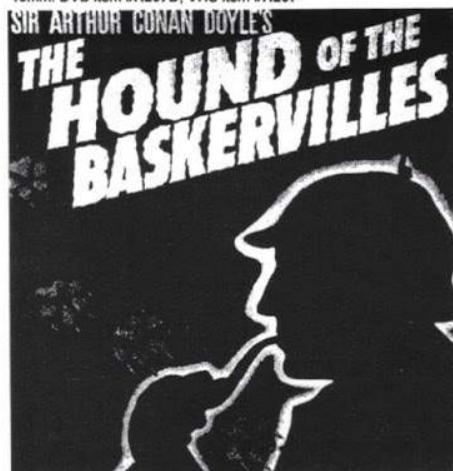
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**EERIE MIDNIGHT HORROR SHOW\*** (1974, aka THE SEXORCIST) Stella Carnicina, Chris Avram, Lucretia Love, Luigi Pistilli. A beautiful young art student purchases an ancient wooden crucifixion statue. In a shocking scene, it comes to life and rapes her. She later finds herself possessed by a demon. She is soon taken to a convent where an exorcism priest is brought in to free her from possession. This is a pretty brutal film. There is one crucifixion scene that is particularly disturbing. The climax is pretty gross and there is quite a bit of nudity throughout the film. All in all, though, it is a fairly effective Italian-made exorcism movie with some good performances, especially by Carnicina and Love. PLEASE...keep this one away from the kiddies. Recommended for Euro-horror fans. Rated R for nudity, sexuality, and violence. Color, from 35mm. DVD item #H304D, VHS item #H304

**THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES\*** (1968) Peter Cushing, Nigel Stock, Gary Raymond, Gabriella Licudi. What a treat! After making the 1959 Hammer classic with Christopher Lee, Cushing turned around and re-essayed the same role again nine years later with equal prowess, although just slightly more subdued. The English moors reverberate with the baying sound of a monstrous creature, one that has already tasted human blood and seems hell-bent on taking the life of Sir Henry Baskerville. Is it a legendary monster or is it something more sinister? Cushing is, again, remarkably effective as Sherlock Holmes. However, it is interesting to note that Nigel Stock, as Watson, is given an enormous amount of screen time, particularly during the second third of the picture. His portrayal is most effective. This production is an interesting mixture of both taped and filmed sequences. Memorable. We highly recommend this fine British thriller. DVD item #H298D, VHS item #H298

**THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES\*** (1936, aka DER HUND VON BASKERVILLE) Bruno Guttner, Fritz Odemar. As a special treat, we've released another obscure version of the Conan Doyle classic. This 1936 German version is beautifully photographed in black and white and features a very classical sounding score. It boasts fine sets and develops its story line in very misty, creepy surroundings. It is interesting to note differences between this and the two Cushing versions. For instance, in the '36 version, Sir Hugo Baskerville is killed by the hound in a tavern, while in the '59 version he dies on the moors. Sir Henry is attacked by the hound on the moors in both the '59 and '68 versions, but in the '36 version he is attacked near a cottage after falling from a ladder. The demise of the villain is handled somewhat differently in the '68 version as opposed to the '36 version, in which a carriage crash is involved. Although this version is in German with no subtitles, anyone familiar with the tale will have no trouble following the story line. This b/w version and the '68 version would make a fine double acquisition for any Sherlock Holmes collector. From 16mm. DVD item #H297D, VHS item #H297



**THE KILLING OF SATAN\*** (1975) Ramon Ravilla, Elizabeth Oropesa, George Estregan. The evil Prince of Magic and his gang of thugs menace a Filipino village. When the gang kidnaps two girls, a young man is called home to take the place of the dying village wizard and save the girls, both of whom are being held in a large cell filled with naked Filipino beauties. Aided by a magic staff, he takes on the evil prince in an exciting duel of magic. He then ends up in a showdown with Satan himself. *The Killing of Satan* is a most unusual and vividly entertaining horror film. It is filled with action and has the feel of a good comic book. There are tons of magic special effects. One particularly gruesome scene starts with a simple slap in the face. Watch out for the leaping cobra demons! Plays at times like a Kung Fu fantasy. This is one you ought to check out. Rated R for nudity and violence. Color, 35mm. DVD item #H305D, VHS item #H305

**THARUS, SON OF ATTILA\*** (1963) Jerome Courtland, Lisa Gastoni, Mimmo Palmara, Rik Von Nutter, John McDouglas. The story line takes place several years after Attila's death. His son, Tharus, is sent to infiltrate and enemy encampment. Unfortunately, he falls in love with the rival chieftain's daughter. But she has been promised in marriage to an evil warrior that turns out to be Tharus' main adversary. A nicely developed sword and sandal thriller. Some sources say this was filmed in 1958. Color, from 35mm. DVD item #SS122D, VHS item #SS122



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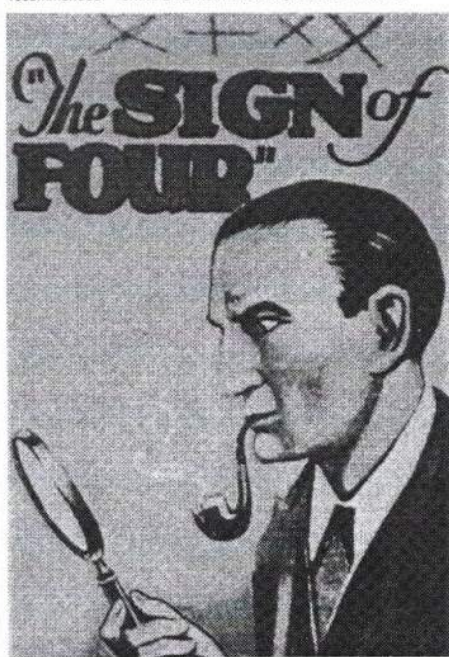
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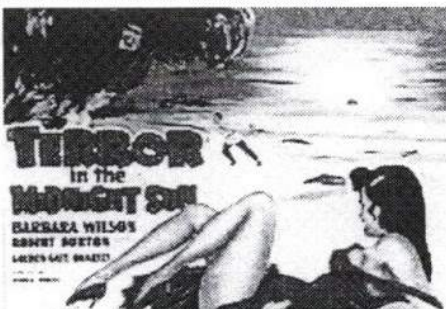
**WAR OF THE MONSTERS\*** (1956) Kojiro Hondo, Kyoko Enami, Akira Natsuki. The sequel to *Gamera the Invincible* has Gamera—who was shot into space at the end of the first movie inside a giant rocket—being diverted back to Earth after a meteorite strikes his ship. Meanwhile, a giant egg is found in a cave in New Guinea. When it hatches, out pops Barugon, a giant lizard with horny spikes and a protective force field. Before too long, Gamera and Barugon are locked in mortal combat, leaving a wake of destruction that has Tokyo in ruins. As Japanese monster movies go, this one isn't half-bad. Special effects are better than the first Gamera film. Color, 16mm. DVD item #S236D, VHS item #S236

**HOUD OF THE BASKERVILLES\*** (1979) Vasily Livanov, Vitaly Solomin. We're going all out for all of you Holmes fans. That's right, we've got litte versions of the Conan Doyle Baskerville classic for you to digest and compare. This 1981 version was filmed in Russia and comes completely sub-titled in English. It is, again, somewhat different in content and flavor to our other two releases, but is definitely colorful and mysterious in its own special way. Recommended. A rarity and a must for all Holmes fans. Color, 35mm. DVD item #H297D, VHS item #H297

**SIGN OF FOUR\*** (1932) Arthur Wontner, Isla Bevan, Ian Hunter, Ben Soutten, Miles Malleon. This is the third appearance by Wontner as Sherlock Holmes. A woman seeks revenge on his partners who absconded with his share of stolen loot. You can also throw in a peg-legged man and his pygmy sidekick, plus a love-interest for Dr. Watson and you've got a really enjoyable Holmes thriller. The boat chase down the Thames is darn good. Highly recommended! 16mm. DVD item #M326D, VHS item #M326



**PRIMAL IMPULSE\*** (1977, aka BLOOD ON THE MOON) Florida Balkon, Klaus Kinski, Peter McEneaney, Lila Kedrova. An astronaut is purposely left on the moon as part of a bizarre experiment headed by Kinski. Meanwhile a beautiful woman on Earth awakens to find that she has no memory of the last several days. Hanging in her closet is a yellow dress with a bloodstain on it. She has dreamt of the strange incident on the moon but knows not why. What is the connection between her and the strange experiment? She ends up being drawn to a coastal village that she has never visited before. She stays in a posh hotel where everyone seems to know her. A little girl on the beach knows strange secrets about her. What is the mystery of the ancient ruins in the woods near the shoreline? This is perhaps the most unique science fiction film we've ever released. It's an engrossing combination of science fiction, mystery, and psychological thriller elements. Although it is somewhat slow in its pacing, it will hold your interest from its very mysterious start to its terrifying climax. Highly recommended. Color, from 35mm. DVD item #S238D, VHS item #S238



**TERROR IN THE MIDNIGHT SUN\*** (1959) Robert Burton, Barbara Wilson, Stan Gester. Finally this movie makes sense! This is the original, non-tampered-with version of what was released here as *Invasion of the Animal People*. As you know, Jerry Warren drastically edited the film and inserted a number of incredibly boring scenes with John Carradine. The Warren scenes are not found in this version (thank God!) and the movie really comes together because of it. The plot has scientists investigating the landing of an Alien spaceship in Lapland. The scene of the spaceship sliding in through the northern snow is very well done and quite memorable. The aliens deposit a giant, furry monster that creates havoc with the local populace. The overall plot echoes of *It Came From Outer Space*. After shedding the preposterous Warren footage, this film can now be looked at as an enjoyable '50s B sci-fi film. From 35mm. DVD item #S235D, VHS item #S235

**A MAN BETRAYED\*** (1936, Republic) Eddie Nugent, Kay Hughes, Lloyd Hughes, John Wray, Edwin Maxwell. Every year we try to release at least one exceptionally good poverty row mystery or crime film. This 1936 Republic gem takes the honors this year. Nugent plays a smooth-talking salesman for an oil-drilling firm who discovers that his company's stock is phony. After one of the company's directors commits suicide, Eddie is framed as though it was murder! Preacher brother Lloyd comes to the rescue. He eventually has to climb into a professional boxing ring to help save his brother. They both find themselves being chased by sleazy gangsters and hard-boiled cops. Most of the early Republics have a high batting average, and this lively crime thriller is no exception. Recommended. 16mm. DVD item #M328D, VHS item #M328



**SHADOW OF SILK LENNOX\*** (1935, Commodore) Lon Chaney, Jr., Jack Mulhall, Dean Benton, Marie Burton, Eddie Cribbon. Wanna see baby pix of Lon? Watch this movie. He looks sooo young as a nightclub owner and underworld crime boss. After setting up a bank robbery, Lon intercepts one of his henchmen who appears to be skipping town with the loot. He corners the rat at the local train station and nails him inside the men's room. Expecting to find the stolen bank money on the body, Lon is puzzled when the loot is no where to be found. Where is it and who has it? Will the cops figure everything out before Lon gets his hands on the cash? This obscure poverty row crime thriller is a little creaky, but still kind of fun. Lon turns in a fine performance as a ruthless, yet "fun-loving" killer. Look for Wally Wales in an unbillied role as a cop. 16mm. DVD item #M327D, VHS item #M327



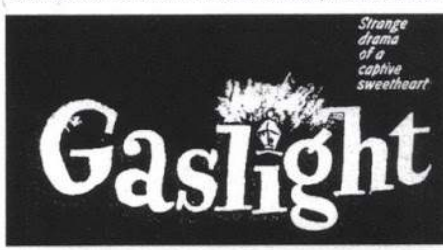
**THE SHE BEAST\*** (1966) Barbara Steele, Ian Ogilvy, John Karlson, Mel Welles. An 18th century witch is hunted down by enraged villagers. She is tied to a dunking stool and killed in a nearby lake, but not before promising to return from the grave for revenge. Centuries later, Barb and her hubby come to the area while on vacation. After a run-in with the local innkeeper, they try to get away in their car, but it crashes into the lake at the very spot that the witch was killed. Instead of Barb emerging from the murky waters, it's the horrible witch, alive once again and out for vengeance. Color, 16mm. DVD item #BS08D, VHS item #BS08

**FANGS OF THE LIVING DEAD\*** (1968 aka MALENKA) Anita Eckberg, Julian Ugarte, John Hamilton, Diana Lorys. A woman inherits a medieval castle. She goes there with great enthusiasm, but is horrified when she arrives to find that it is infested with bloodthirsty vampires. Eckberg is an interesting actress, and although her looks were fading somewhat by this time, she was certainly still vibrant enough to pull off this type of youthful characterization. However, her beauty is almost overshadowed by the stunning beauty of the female vampires that surround her. This is a big upgrade from the print we had out a few years ago that ended up in our video rest home section a couple of years ago. Beautiful color, 35mm. DVD item #H299D, VHS item #H299

**BELL FROM HELL\*** (1970) Viveca Lindfors, Renaud Verley, Alfredo Mayo, Maribel Martin. After being locked away for years, a man comes back to seek his bizarre revenge on his aunt and her three daughters who had him falsely institutionalized as a psycho. He begins to play macabre jokes on them. Things go awry though, when the man ends up being tied by the neck to a bell tower rope. After the inaugural ring of the bell the next day, things take a horrific turn for the worse. This was never released theatrically in the U.S. and boy did the indie distributors miss a sure bet because this is a quality Euro-horror chiller that all fans of the sub-genre are going to want to see. Color, from 16mm. DVD item #H300D, VHS item #H300

**THE GLASS SPHINX\*** (1967) Robert Taylor, Anita Eckberg, Gianni Serra, Giacomo Rossi-Stuart. This is basically a mummy movie with no mummy. Still lots of fun, though. Taylor is an American professor searching the Egyptian sands for the lost tomb of King Opposus, a forgotten pharaoh who supposedly had a secret elixir for eternal life and ruled for hundreds of years. Within his tomb lies the glass sphinx, a spectacular carving made of pure diamond. Taylor and his comrades eventually locate the elusive crypt, but their expedition is imperiled by a group of thieves who plot to carry off the fantastic treasures found within the dusty tomb. Lots of excitement and intrigue. It plays at times like an Indiana Jones movie. Color, 16mm. DVD item #AA34D, VHS item #AA34

**GASLIGHT\*** (1940) Anton Walbrook, Diana Wynyard, Robert Newton, Frank Pettingell. *Gaslight* has been filmed several times, but before the MGM Charles Boyer 1944 classic there was this well made, equally effective British edition. This version has an overt sense of eeriness to it that is most memorable. A calculating, latently maniacal husband tries to drive his wife insane in an effort to discover some hidden family gems. Only the heroic efforts of a Scotland yard detective save her from his sinister clutches. This version is so good that MGM make a concerted effort to gather up and destroy all the prints! Thank goodness they failed. Much recommended. From 16mm. DVD item #M330D, VHS item #M330





# Frankly Scarlet

Great snakes! We certainly never planned it that way, but with this latest edition of *Scarlet Street* we seem to have inadvertently begun an honored tradition that will occur, oh, every 23 issues—the Lagoon Issue!

Back in *Scarlet Street* #23 (pictured Top Right), we interviewed a number of bronzed and buff jungle personalities, including the late Irish McCalla, buxom blonde star of TV's *SHEENA QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE*; and hunky Christopher Atkins, the rarely—and even when rarely, barely—dressed star of *THE BLUE LAGOON* (1980).

Among the hardball questions tossed at Chris was one asking him about posing nude for a celebrity poster, bedecked in naught but a snake (Below Right), to which the little dickens ribaldly responded, "Snake? What snake? There was no snake!"

Chris was happy to lay nudity bare for us. "Let me tell you something—if you're on an island for three-and-a-half months and you're four-and-a-half hours by boat from the nearest store, and there's nobody but 30 crew members on the island, I guarantee that you'd be running around without your clothes on. I became a devout nudist after that movie.

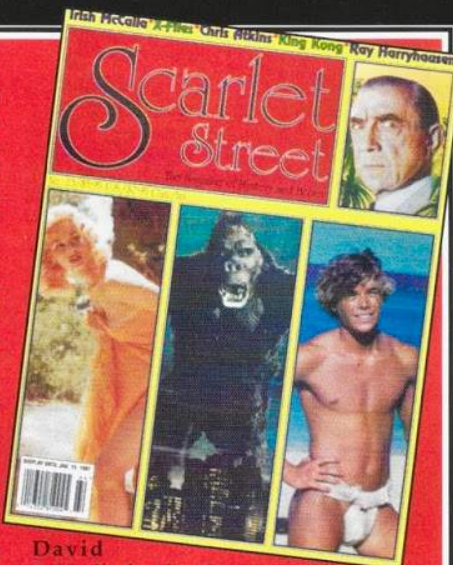
"They sent us for two weeks before principle photography to do nothing but tan. They built these little tanning booths for Brooke Shields and I to do nothing but tan all over. As time went on, I wound up on the other side of the island, at the nude beach, where I had no trouble getting an all-over tan . . ."

The issue was our first to heavily feature beefcake photos (hardly avoidable in the cases of Atkins, Jon Hall, Joe Lara, Harry Hamlin, Christopher Lambert, Johnny Sheffield, Mike Henry, and Richard Denning, though avoidance was hardly our intention). Naturally, there was some rumbling and grumbling from the Self-Styled Guardians of Public Morals (who found nothing objectionable in the cheesecake pix of scantily-clad jungle queens McCalla, Carole Landis, Kay Aldridge, and Dorothy Lamour), but *Scarlet Street* #23 rode the storm—the drizzle, really, provided by a few drips—and proved to be one of our most popular issues. Nevertheless, no official follow-up was ever planned.

Now, here it is, 23 issues beyond Issue #23, and we're once again exploring a lush, tropical lagoon—only this body of H<sub>2</sub>O is Black, not Blue, and its denizens aren't the tanned, youthful bodies of Chris Atkins and Brooke Shields, but the one and only Gill Man, the Creature From the Black Lagoon!

So much has been written about ol' Blackie Lagoon in the past that it was momentarily daunting to flesh out a fresh (water) approach, but *Scarlet Street* is known for finding something new and thought-provoking to say about even the most seemingly tired of subjects. We hit the jackpot with Erich Kuersten's intriguingly revisionist *BETWEEN THE JUNGLE AND THE STARS: THE CREATURE TRILOGY*. Then there are the interviews. Not for *SS* to feature only one or two interviews with Creature-related luminaries—gathered together in this very issue, you'll find Julie Adams, Ricou Browning, Ben Chapman, Lori Nelson, John Bromfield, Brett Halsey, and Tom Hennesy.

And that still leaves room for most of our regular features, an update (and wake) on *NERO WOLFE*, interviews with actor David Drake and filmmaker Ted A. Bohus, and a generous excerpt from cultural critic



David J. Skal's fascinating new study of Halloween—*Death Makes a Holiday* (Bloomsbury, 2002).

This issue also marks an anniversary for our invaluable assistant editor, Dan Clayton, who joined *Scarlet Street* on our jaunt to *THE BLUE LAGOON* and has been with us ever since. "Assistant editor" doesn't begin to cover the jobs handled by the many-hatted Dan; he transcribes interviews, proofreads, writes reviews, handles subscriptions and orders, and even builds extra shelves for our dangerously overflowing library. Dan takes considerable pride in his work for *Scarlet Street*, and we take considerable pride in having him as a member of the team.

Dan signed on just as a former distributor, owing a lot of genre magazines a lot of dough, suddenly closed shop. We'd had the foresight to insist on being paid in advance, so we didn't lose much cash. However, *Scarlet Street* #23 was already printing when the culprits fled like Larson E. Whip-snade into the night, and it left us with more back issues of that number than any other in our inventory (even though #23 was a best-seller). Dan often jokes that he'll leave the mag the day we sell our last copy of *SS* #23.

He's stuck for life . . .!

Richard Valley





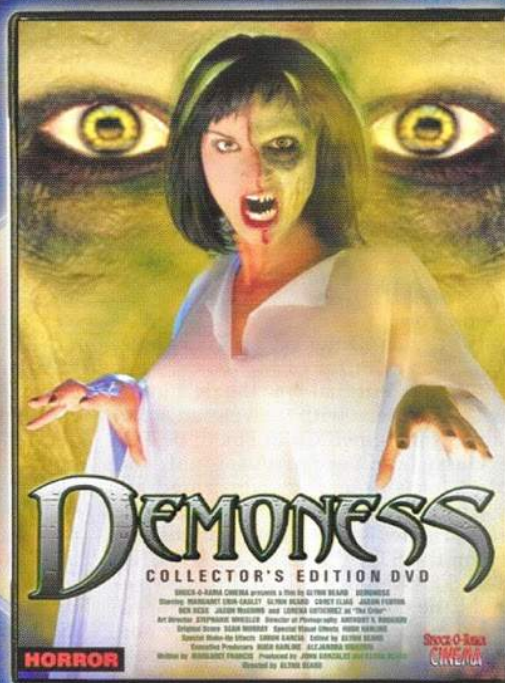
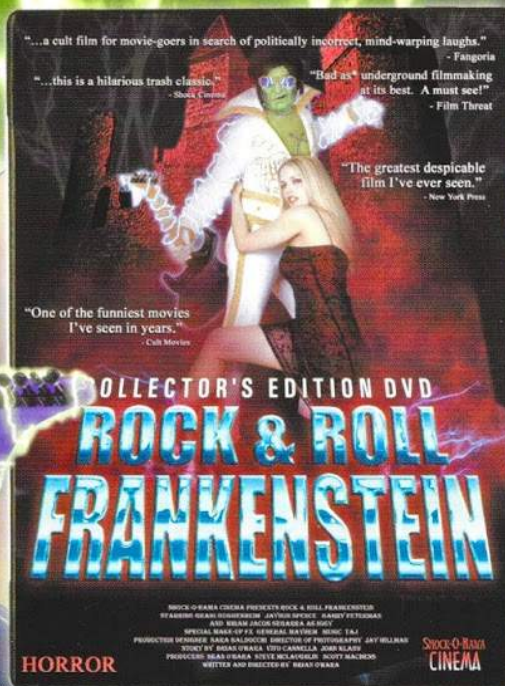
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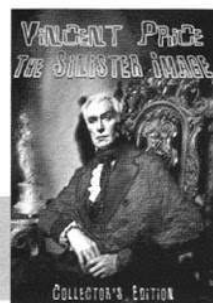
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## SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 8

shops, but her fiction aged badly and is too outdated to rediscover today.

I also loved the articles on Nero Wolfe, by Paula Vitaris and Ken Hanke. What a terrific group of interviews! I hope Paula Vitaris will become a regular contributor to *Scarlet Street*. Those articles make me all the more aware of what a mega-bummer it is that A&E has decided not to renew this exceptional series. Nuts! Pfui!

Lelia Loban

Falls Church, Virginia

Thank you for interviewing Colin Fox as part of your NERO WOLFE coverage. I've been an admirer of Mr. Fox's work for 30+ years, but that was the first interview I'd ever seen with the veteran actor. I'd always imagined Colin Fox to be erudite, classy, and very professional, and Paula Vitaris' interview confirmed my longstanding impression of him. I hope *Scarlet Street* revisits Mr. Fox to discuss his work on the STRANGE PARADISE TV serial. STRANGE PARADISE has received little coverage over the years, especially in comparison to the other horror soap, DARK SHADOWS, and would be a very appropriate topic for a *Scarlet Street* retrospective. Colin Fox did some excellent work on STRANGE PARADISE and it would be interesting to hear his insights into and memories of that series.

Fred Herring

FredHerring@cs.com

Ever since Michael Weldon's *Psychotronic Encyclopedia* taught us that even trash has standards, there's been an explosion of publications devoted to genre criticism and commentary. What there hasn't been a lot of, though, is gay genre criticism and commentary. I'm not referring to the theory that all movies must be given a gay reading. The Gloria Holden/Nan Grey scene in DRACULA'S DAUGHTER pretty much demands it, of course, but to insist on a homosexual subtext in CITIZEN KANE does that film a great disservice. I do feel, however, that an analysis of CITIZEN KANE should, at least, mention the possibility that Joseph Cotten's character has a dash of the dancer in him. And that's the kind of thing I've come to expect from *Scarlet Street*—especially after issue #41.

Post GODS AND MONSTERS, we know how an artist's sexuality influences his art, and that's probably why the (you should pardon the expression) straight press rarely touches on THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. It's an ideal subject for *Scarlet Street*, though, and *Scarlet Street* is the ideal magazine to do it justice. And did you ever! The 10th Anniversary Spectacular was exactly that: a perfect blend of incisive and informative writing and provocative, yet pertinent, photographs. Personally, I like looking at the pictures of half-naked men, so Helmut Berger was a palpable treat. Then again—and I don't think it's just me—so was Ursula Andress. Nobody can say you don't give each team equal time.

I realize Issue #44 was only Part One of the Christopher Lee material, but I have to wonder why there was no discussion about Mario Bava's THE WHIP AND THE BODY. Bava's pictures always reward analysis, and this is one of his best; a psychosexual costume drama in which a woman is haunted by her sadistic lover's ghost. Bava's actresses are usually stunning (in BLACK SUNDAY, he introduced Barbara Steele, an icon who suggests the delights of the boudoir and the embalming room simultaneously), but in WHIP, he tops himself: the woman is played by the absolutely gorgeous Daliah Lavi. Christopher Lee, as the lover, is more that a match for her—he's never looked better. Yeah, in HORROR OF DRACULA, he's sexy—but, in THE WHIP AND THE BODY, Lee is hot!

And speaking of hotness, I'd like to suggest a topic I feel would be of interest to your readers: an examination of the life and career of THE MILLION EYES OF SU MURU star, George Nader. Nader's an ideal candidate for the *Scarlet* treatment, what with ROBOT MONSTER, Rock Hudson, the scandal, and Chrome. And I think he took his shirt off in everything he did. I know *Scarlet Street* would do a terrific job on George Nader, but I'm confident that, whatever the subject, you'll continue to strike the same delicate balance you did in #41, between eye candy and food for thought. And to show that confidence, I'm putting my money where my mouth is and enclosing a check for my new subscription.



In closing, let me say this: Despite the excellent content, the most impressive thing about the Anniversary Issue was the simple fact that it was the 10th anniversary. In a crowded field, longevity is an achievement. Congratulations and keep up the good work!

Larry Becker  
New York, NY

No WHIP AND THE BODY article this time 'round, Larry, but never fear—we're sure one of our unusual gang of suspects will whip it out sooner or later.

I found so much good information in *Scarlet Street* #43. I'm a bit too young to remember the legendary Marilyn Monroe, but it was good to get some detailed information about this beautiful actress. I am glad you mentioned the DVD/video BOOGIEMAN. I just wish that they would take some of the new boogiemens, such as Ghostface, Freddy Kreuger, Pinhead, and Michael Myers, and put them up against the older boogiemens like Dracula, Frankenstein, The Mummy, The Creature From the Black Lagoon, Invisible Man, and The Blob. Also, I really enjoyed your write-up on Dorian Gray. This is an unforgettable movie. I will never forget how he looked in the mirror and saw his real image, an image of an aged man. How horrifying!

Sharon Diane Roberts  
New Smyrna Beach, FL

If you ask us, Sharon, this issue's Cover Boy would make short work of all those new kids!

Love your magazine and I especially love SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN. Hope you will have someone write up HOMICIDAL, which has just come out on DVD. It is a wonderful film and much more than merely a PSYCHO clone. Jean Arless gives a towering performance in what must have been an almost impossible part to play. The film also destroyed her movie career.

What is really needed is an interview with any cast members who may still be alive—especially Patricia Breslin. It would be really great to know how Arless was coached for the role and what were the problems encountered. *Time* magazine called HOMICIDAL better than PSYCHO. It's not, but it's a hell of a film and, though William Castle used many PSYCHO ideas, he outdid the latter in many ways. In my opinion, given the cast, script and budget, I doubt if Hitchcock could have done much better. And the story of how Arless was able to give such a great performance should be told.

Alan Grossman  
Florence, OR

William Castle's HOMICIDAL was reviewed in *Scarlet Street* #45, Alan, by our estimable "landlord," John F. Black.

I love your magazine! I discovered it while browsing through Hastings Bookstore in Maryville, Tennessee, a little town near the Great Smoky Mountains. It was *Scarlet Street* #40. I was hooked right away because I admire Bogart and Peter Lorre. From then on, I bought back issues

and now I'm a subscriber. *Scarlet Street* has the right blend of film noir, Hitchcock, Sherlock Holmes, horror, sci-fi, and humor. I always wanted to know more about Peter Cushing, Jeremy Brett, and Vincent Price. Your articles are juicy yet informative, educational, and lots of fun. Hopefully in future articles there will be stories on Julian Sands, who I believe is a future Peter Cushing. I'm curious about his film TALE OF A VAMPIRE, Wesley Snipes and the BLADE movies, and Bruce Campbell and the EVIL DEAD films. When I go in stores such as Borders and Barnes and Noble, your magazine is hidden in the back of the entertainment section and is hard to find. I have to really look for it or ask for help. Thanks for creating a great magazine!

Linda Goss  
lindagoss84@hotmail.com.

If *Scarlet Street* is cruelly hidden in your local stores, *Scarlet Streeters*, just grab 'em and move 'em to the front row. That's what *we* do!

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Yes, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds... nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

So, gang... now's your chance to get the *Scarlet Street* you've been missing! Just fill out the handy dandy coupon and we'll send you copies that, in the words of Ygor, are "broken, crippled, and distorted"—just a teensy bit.

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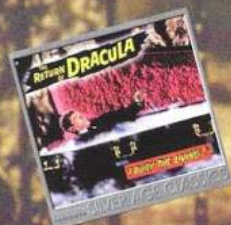
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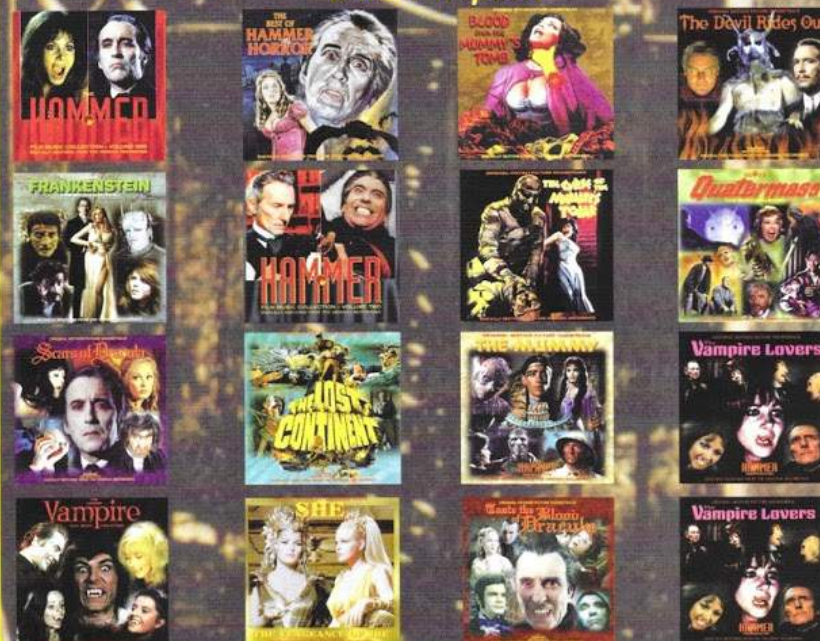


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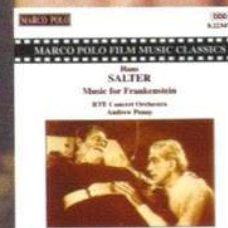
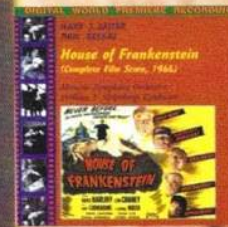


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# the NEWS



# HOUND

Here's a big Halloween howl from The Hound, who tricks up some treats for readers peckish for particulars on impending media projects...

## Now Slaying

Currently playing is **RIPLEY'S GAME** (Fine Line Features), starring John Malkovich as the criminally talented Mr. Tom Ripley of novelist Patricia Highsmith's series of thrillers. Dougray Scott costars as a man manipulated by the psychopathic Ripley into a murder plot.

In DreamWorks' October release **THE RING**, people die after they watch the disturbing images on a peculiar videocassette. (No, it's not **DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR?**) Naomi Watts stars in director Gore Verbinski's thriller based on the 1998 Japanese horror film of the same name. Watts plays an investigative reporter who believes it's all just coincidence and unfounded panic, but changes her mind pronto once she watches the tape. Martin Henderson, Brian Cox, and Amber Tamblyn (daughter of Russ) costar.

**THE TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE** is revealed in Universal's October remake of Stanley Donen's 1963 romantic Hitchcockian thriller **CHARADE**. Jonathan Demme (**SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**) directed and cowrote this adaptation, which stars Mark Wahlberg, Thandie Newton, and Tim Robbins.

**THE RULES OF ATTRACTION** (Lion's Gate) are broken with abandon in director/screenwriter Roger Avary's film version of Brett Easton Ellis' 1987 novel, set in the same stark universe as his 1991 bestseller *American Psycho*. **DAWSON'S CREEK** star James Van Der Beek portrays Sean Bateman (the younger brother of *Psycho*'s murderous Patrick Bateman), a collegiate Casanova and drug dealer caught in a carnal triangle with bisexual fellow student Paul (Ian Somerhalder) and Paul's former flame, Laura (Shannyn Sossamon).

Boogie Boogie Boogie! **GHOST SHIP** (Dark Castle/Warner Bros.) haunts cinema halls at Halloween, with salvage sailors Julianna Margulies and Gabriel Byrne shivering their timbers aboard a spook-infested passenger liner. Costarring are Isaiah Washington and Ron Eldard.

## Theatrical Thrills

Coming in November: Director Brian DePalma returns to his enjoyably trashy roots with **FEMME FATALE** (Warner Bros.), starring Antonio Banderas as a photographer obsessed with a sultry jewel thief (Rebecca Romijn-Stamos)... The Earth is in danger of annihilation (what, again?) from forces deep down below in the sci-fi thriller **THE CORE** (Paramount),

which sends scientists Aaron Eckhart and Hillary Swank on a journey to the center of you-know-where... Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson star in Columbia's update of the sixties TV show **I SPY**... Fans of Douglas Sirk's fifties big-screen soap operas will get their tearjerking fix with writer/director Todd Haynes' **FAR FROM HEAVEN** (Focus Features), starring Julianne Moore and Dennis Quaid.

George Clooney trades in his ER scrubs for a spacesuit in **SOLARIS** (20th Century Fox), director Steven Soderberg's remake of the 1972 Russian sci-fi drama... The 20th James Bond adventure, **DIE AN-**



"You're not Superman, you know."

**OTHER DAY** (MGM/UA), stars Pierce Brosnan in his fourth mission as 007, and he's joined by Oscar-winning Bond girl Halle Berry... Disney puts a sci-fi spin on Stevenson's 1883 classic *Treasure Island* with their animated feature **TREASURE PLANET**... More magical hijinks at Hogwarts are conjured up in **HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS** (Warner Bros.).

## Upcoming Attractions

Our Scarlet cover boy The Gill Man may soon resurface in a remake of **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**, to be shot in Australia by director by Guillermo Del Toro (**MIMIC**)... Producer/director Stephen Sommers, the man behind Universal's successful new **MUMMY** movies, turns to the studio's all-star monster rallies of the forties as inspiration for his next horror outing. **X-MEN**'s Hugh Jackman is in talks to portray **VAN HELSING**, Bram Stoker's famed vampire hunter,

who in Sommers' big-screen tale won't just be pitted against Count Dracula—he'll battle The Wolf Man and Frankenstein's Monster, too. Production is slated to start shooting in Europe late this year for a 2003 debut.

## Future Features

Kirsten Dunst stars in the upcoming cyberspace shocker **PULSE** from horror vet Wes Craven (director of the **SCREAM** trilogy) and former **X FILES** writer/producer Vince Gilligan. It's another U.S. production based on a Japanese horror film—this one entitled **KAIRO** (2001), about a computer virus that starts infecting those living (and dying) in the real world... Those poisonous Borgias, those archetypes of European family values, are on display next year in a 20th Century Fox release written and directed by Neil Jordan (**INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE**). Heading the cast of **BORGIA** are Kenneth Branagh as Cesare and Christina Ricci as Lucretia, along with Ian McKellan, Antonio Banderas, Jean Reno, Ewan McGregor, and John Malkovich as Niccolo Machiavelli.

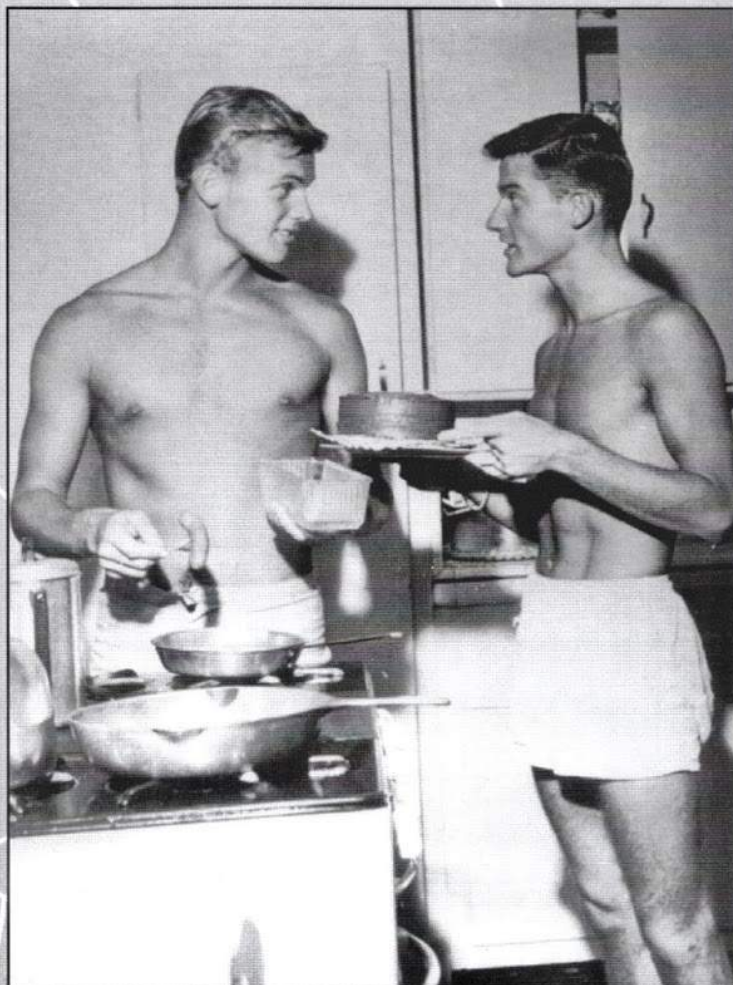
The life—and mysterious death—of actor George Reeves is the subject of the upcoming Miramax film **TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE AMERICAN WAY**. The studio hopes to start production in early 2003, but has yet to cast the leading role. Kyle MacLachlan tested for the part of the small-screen **SUPERMAN** star, but is reportedly out of the running. Other actors said to be considered for the role are Britisher Colin Firth (**THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**), Mark Ruffalo (**YOU CAN COUNT ON ME**), and the ever-popular Hugh Jackman. Already in the cast are James Woods and Joaquin Phoenix.

## The Alexander Technique

What's so great about Alexander the Great? Two competing megabuck film productions aim to show us. Alexander's ragtag band of Macedonians are due before the cameras early next year in a Dino De Laurentiis production directed by Baz Luhrmann (**MOULIN ROUGE**). Scripted by Ted Tally from the novels of Valerio Manfredi, it's being cofinanced by Universal and Fox to the tune of a record-breaking \$140 Million. Leonardo DiCaprio is the likely star, now that he won't be portraying Alexander in a competing—and now kaput—film project from director Martin Scorsese. Also on the box-office battlefield is an Alexander biopic to be helmed by Oliver Stone sometime in 2003, starring 26-year-old Irish actor Col-

*Continued on page 21*





**TAB:** Say, Roddy, have you seen the swell Discussion Boards over on the Scarlet Website? You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in our old pictures . . .

**RODDY:** Subtexts? What subtexts?

**Hot Dog!** You asked for 'em, you got 'em—and they really take the cake! Nothing holds a candle to the brand new Discussion Boards at . . .

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# WOLFE AT THE DOOR...AND OUT!

by Paula Vitaris

**P**fui! If only it were flummery—but it's not. In August, A&E cancelled its original series *NERO WOLFE*, starring Maury Chaykin as the seventh-of-a-ton detective and Timothy Hutton (pictured Bottom Right with cast member Kari Matchett) as his wisecracking assistant, Archie Goodwin, in the wake of falling ratings and diminished advertising revenue. Ratings fell across the board, and *NERO WOLFE* was not an exception to that; only 1.134 million households tuned in from the end of May to the middle of August, with a mere 397,000 viewers in the desired 18-49 age demographic. The final episode aired on Sunday, August 18, although rebroadcasts of episodes from the show's two seasons will probably continue for some time to come.

Despite its excellent production values and performances by the cast, *NERO WOLFE* never caught on with a mass audience or garnered Emmy nominations. Ironically, Terry Teachout's review praising *NERO WOLFE* appeared in the August 12 edition of *The National Review* just as cancellation was announced, but that was a rare mention of the show in the national media. (*Scarlet Street* was the only genre magazine to extensively cover the series during its run.) After some initial advertising for the April second season premiere, A&E stopped publicizing the show, nor did it try to find a more congenial timeslot once Sunday evening proved ineffective against network and other cable programming. And although A&E often releases tapes and DVDs of its movies simultaneously with broadcast, it did not do the same for *NERO WOLFE*'s first season, thus failing to take advantage of a unique opportunity to create recognition for the show.

Despite the low ratings for the second season, *NERO WOLFE* had a loyal and vocal audience infuriated by the cancellation. They promptly mounted a campaign to bring the show back, writing letters and e-mails and creating web sites (<http://www.personalephemera.com/nero>) and E-mail lists devoted to convincing A&E to rescind its decision or to find the series another home.

The week before cancellation, A&E had fired Allen Sabinson, its vice president of programming and a *WOLFE* supporter. The show's production staff had already begun planning for a third season, although troubles with ratings and revenue and Sabinson's dismissal clearly indicated all was not well at the cable channel. *NERO WOLFE* executive producer Michael Jaffe said that he was not entirely surprised by the cancellation. "The writing was on the wall. They kept letting people go. They were clearly having budget problems, they kept changing the size of the commitment, and when Allen Sabinson was released, it was clear that's what was going to happen. A lot of it had to do with A&E's losing *LAW & ORDER* [to TNT] and with ongoing changes in the business. We're in a situation where nobody knows what the hell is going on. Who would have thought the Osbournes would get numbers like they're getting?"

The cancellation, Jaffe added, was "enormously disappointing. We had a dedicated following. But with the drop in A&E's average rating, their advertising rate and their 'sell'—their ability to get a premium for certain kinds of programming—went down. They lost a lot on their overall programming. I gather that it just became unfeasible for them economically to continue with *NERO WOLFE*. Unfortunately, it's such a unique and A&E-specific show that it's very unlikely that anyone else would be interested in picking it up. You're never going to sell it to a network. The other cable channels that we've considered clearly can't afford it. They spend less on their programs than A&E. My partner, Howard Braunstein, and I

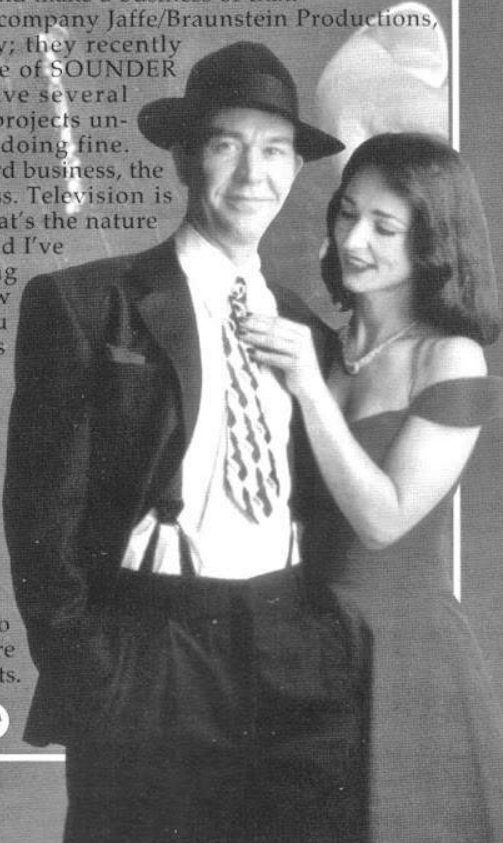
have thought about it quite a bit, but we haven't been able to come up with a cable channel that would be viable. So we had two great years and that's where it's going to end. Nothing great goes on forever."

Sharon Doyle, *NERO WOLFE* writer and consulting producer, felt that the quality of the show's production was one of the best she had ever worked on. "All of the money was up on the screen and everyone was jumping through hoops to keep costs down. It strikes me that A&E is being shortsighted in the long run in terms of return. *NERO WOLFE* will rerun forever and never age, just as the denizens of the brownstone don't."

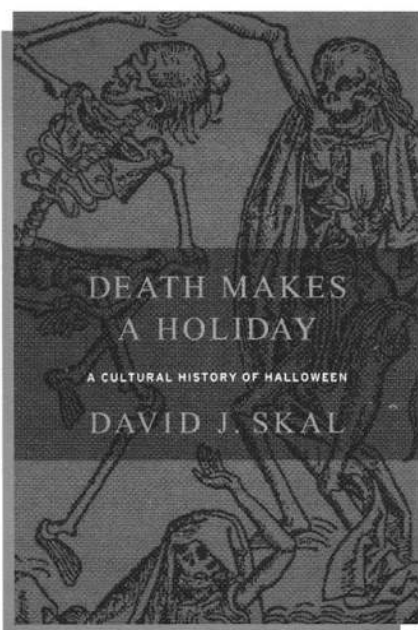
Jaffe had hoped to make a feature film from one of the most well-known and beloved *Nero Wolfe* novels, *In the Best Families* (1950), in which Wolfe and Archie must find a way to destroy Wolfe's arch nemesis, crime boss Arnold Zeck. Jaffe is still considering the possibility of going forward with the project. "From the beginning, all the principals involved have wanted to make a movie version of one book, *In the Best Families*," he said, "and we're thinking about that right now. I'm really the key person in that decision-making process, and I have to decide whether or not I either want to write the script myself, or hire someone to write it. And it's a speculative venture. We'd have to go out and find financing and distribution and it's an awful lot of work. This week we tore down \$800,000 in sets. It's a shame, because it will be really difficult to get them back up. You'd have to have a lot of money to reconstruct the sets for a series, and even more for a feature."

Will *NERO WOLFE* ever show up on home video? (*THE GOLDEN SPIDERS* and *THE DOORBELL RANG* are available on VHS.) Jaffe is unaware of any plans A&E might have for home video, but if they don't release the series, he would be willing to undertake a release himself, if he can obtain the rights. "I think there's a large enough audience out there to justify it. You're not going to sell 100,000 units, but you could certainly sell three or four thousand a year and make a business of that."

Jaffe and his company Jaffe/Braunstein Productions, remain very busy; they recently finished a remake of *SOUNDER* for ABC, and have several other TV-movie projects underway. "We're doing fine. That's our standard business, the long-form business. Television is a tough field. That's the nature of our business and I've been doing it long enough to know that some days you have good things happen and some days you don't. I wrote two of the two-part *NERO WOLFE* stories and directed one, and I executive-produced and financed them all. I put a ton of hours from my life into the show and we're proud of the results. We did good."







Candy corn meets cultural criticism in **DEATH MAKES A HOLIDAY: A Cultural History of Halloween**. Author David J. Skal examines the amazing phenomenon of Halloween, exploring its dark Celtic history and illuminating why it has evolved — in the course of a few short generations — from a quaint, small-scale celebration into the largest seasonal marketing event outside of Christmas.

Did you know that trick-or-treating in America was originally a Thanksgiving activity? Or that the Irish potato famine played a major role in the arrival of Halloween celebrations in North America? Or that Harry Houdini, who died on Halloween, vowed to return from the grave in what would be the greatest escape trick of all time? A mix of anecdote and analysis, **DEATH MAKES A HOLIDAY** is an informative and fascinating examination of America's favorite holiday.

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## NEWS HOUND

*Continued from page 18*

in Farrell (MINORITY REPORT). HBO, meanwhile, has abandoned their planned 10-hour Alexander miniseries, now that producer Mel Gibson has left the project.

### Déjà Views

Call it SPIDER envy: The rumors are hotter than x-ray vision in July that Warner Bros. is putting another big-screen Superman saga on the production fast track. Reportedly, a super-script by J. J. Abrams has prompted Warners to zap their other planned superhero flicks into the Forbidden Zone—namely BATMAN: YEAR ONE, BATMAN BEYOND, SUPERMAN VS. BATMAN, and CATWOMAN. No one has yet been cast as the MAN OF STEEL (the possible title for the new installment), but the hottest gossip has Brendan Fraser, Josh Hartnett, and Jude Law as contenders.

Angelina Jolie returns—pigtail and pulchritude intact—in LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER 2: THE CRADLE OF LIFE (New Line Cinema), currently in production for a summer 2003 release. This time the vivacious video-game gal fights a Chinese criminal mastermind (can you say Fu Manchu?) with the help of Gerard Butler (DRACULA 2000) and Djimon Hounsou (GLADIATOR). . . X2— Fox's summer 2003 followup to X-MEN—returns Wolverine (Hugh Jackman), Storm (Halle Berry), Professor Xavier (Patrick Stewart), and the rest of the merry Marvel mutants to the screen. They're joined by newcomers Nightcrawler (Alan Cumming), Pyro (Aaron Stanford), Colossus (Daniel Cudmore), Siryn (Shauna Kane), Jubilee (Kea Wong), and Lady Deathstrike (Kelly Hu).

Seen briefly in the first film, and due for more (in)visibility this time, is Kitty "Shadowcat" Pryde (Katie Stewart), along with fellow X-Kid Bobby "Iceman" Drake (Shawn Ashmore).

### Small Screen News

As SMALLVILLE begins its second season on the WB network, its producers have created another super-series for the network's fall lineup: BIRDS OF PREY, loosely based on the DC Comic of the same name. In a future Gotham City abandoned by Batman, three young women—all linked to the Caped Crusader—step in to do some grll-type crime-fighting. Helena Kyle, aka the Huntress (played by former DARK ANGEL cast member Ashley Scott), is the daughter of the late Catwoman and Batman. Barbara Gordon, once known by her alter ego Batgirl, is now known as Oracle (STARSHIP TROOPERS' Dina Meyer), a wheelchair-bound computer ace who heads the BIRDS' command center. Young telepathic protegee Dinah Lance (17-year-old Rachel Skarsten) is a variation on comic-book crimefighter Black Canary. Assisting them is familiar Wayne family retainer Alfred Pennyworth (veteran British character actor Ian Abercrombie). BIRDS OF PREY airs on Wednesdays at 9:00PM Eastern and Pacific Time.

### Sunnydale Doings

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER has begun its seventh season—and it looks all but certain to be Sarah Michelle Gellar's final foray as slayer-in-charge. Can a Buffyless BUFFY survive? The show has already endured curtailed appearances by actor Anthony Stewart Head (Buffy's pa-

triarchal watcher, Rupert Giles), who relocated to his native England. BUFFY fans suffered an even greater loss at the close of season six with the shooting death of Tara Maclay (Amber Benson), the winsome Wiccan lover of Buffy's best bud, Willow Rosenberg (Allison Hannigan). Many viewers voiced their resentment at Tara's violent end, particularly since it also marked the end of U.S. television's only positive portrayal of an enduring lesbian relationship.

Sunnydale's subterranean Hellmouth seems to be jinxing more than the cast roster. The critically acclaimed but Emmy-bereft series lost its chance for award consideration of the teleplay for last season's elaborate musical episode "Once More With Feeling" when the Emmy folks accidentally left it off the voting ballots. (The episode did end up earning one nomination—for music direction.) Fans can at least mitigate their indignation by listening to the "Once More With Feeling" soundtrack CD, available on Rounder Records. Anthony Stewart Head, whose vocal talents are a highlight of the tuneful episode (he's appeared as Frank N. Furter in U.K. productions of THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW), is awaiting the planned 2003 startup of his BUFFY spinoff miniseries, THE WATCHER (aka RIPPER), a U.K.-based supernatural drama to be coproduced with the BBC.

### The Wicked Stage

Holy libretto! Warner Bros. has signed Tim Burton, director of BATMAN and BATMAN RETURNS, to stage a Broadway musical starring the Caped Crusader.

*Continued on page 22*





The stars of TV's **ADVENTURES OF SUPER-MAN**—John Hamilton, George Reeves, Jack Larson, and Noel Neill.

#### NEWS HOUND

*Continued from page 21*

**BATMAN THE MUSICAL** is set to start production next year for a tentative Broadway debut in 2004. The Bat-traction will feature songs by Jim Steinman, already an expert at musical bats—he wrote the tunes for Roman Polanski's *DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES*, which puts the bite on Broadway this fall. Here's hoping the Penguin doesn't try to sing while chewing on raw fish.

**DORIAN**, a contemporary musical adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, had its world premiere in September at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts in Denver, Colorado. Robert Cuccioli of Broadway's *JEKYLL & HYDE* starred as Henry Lord (based on the character of Lord Henry Wotton), the decadent confidant of young Dorian Gray, portrayed by newcomer Matt Cavenaugh. Director, choreographer, and co-writer James J. Mellon transposed the novel's setting to late 20th-century New Orleans; the score by Mellon and Scott DeTurk is infused with regional jazz and blues. Visit [www.dorianthemusical.com](http://www.dorianthemusical.com) for updates on future stagings.

The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry, England, was the venue for a new stage production of Arthur Conan Doyle's most famous Sherlock Holmes tale, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The adaptation was scripted by playwright/actor Simon Williams, perhaps best remembered as Captain James Bellamy in *UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS*. Williams appeared as Sir Henry Baskerville, the imperiled heir guarded by Holmes (Julian Forsythe) and Watson (Daniel Hill). The Hound itself was portrayed on stage—not by your Canine Columnist, more's the pity, but by an animatronic figure. The play, which completed its run at The Belgrade in September, is now touring regional theaters prior to a West End debut.

#### The Home Video Vault

Debuting on DVD in October from Warner Home Video: seminal Hammer Horrors *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *HORROR OF DRACULA*, the 1934 William Powell classic *THE THIN MAN*, and the 1958 Rosalind Russell starrer *AUNTIE MAME*. All titles list for \$19.98

each... Other October DVD debuts include *CASINO ROYALE* (MGM, \$19.98), Hammer's *TO THE DEVIL—A DAUGHTER* (Anchor Bay, \$19.98), the revival telefilm *I SPY RETURNS* (Columbia-TriStar, \$19.95), *BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF* (Universal, \$26.98), New Line's *JASON GOES TO HELL* (\$19.98) and *JASON X* (\$26.98), a boxed set of original *GIGANTOR* cartoons from Rhino Video (\$59.98), and a set of three Coffin Joe features by Jose Mojica Marins from Fantoma Films (\$59.95).

*SPIDER-MAN* (Columbia-TriStar) spins onto home video in November at \$28.96 on DVD and \$24.96 on VHS. It's also available in a limited edition DVD gift set for \$49.95, packaged with a comic art print, a film cel, and a reprint of Marvel Comics' *Amazing Fantasy* #15—Spider-Man's debut.

Also scheduled for November are Hitchcock's 1955 confection *TO CATCH A THIEF* (Paramount, \$26.98 DVD), the dragon drama *REIGN OF FIRE* (Buena Vista; \$29.99 DVD), *MEN IN BLACK 2* (Columbia-TriStar; \$28.96 DVD, \$24.96 VHS), and *STAR WARS EPISODE II: ATTACK OF THE CLONES* (Fox; \$29.98 DVD, \$24.98 VHS). Or have a Jar Jar Binks festival with the two-pack of *EPISODE I and II* (\$49.98 DVD, \$29.98 VHS)... November also brings DVD sets of *BABYLON 5 Season One* (Warner, \$99.98), *HIGHLANDER Season One* (\$89.98), and *THE X FILES Season Six* (Fox, \$149.98).

Some choice British mysteries are newly available in DVD boxed sets. *AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MISS MARPLE* features the late Joan Hickson in *THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY*, *A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED*, and *A POCKETFUL OF RYE* (BBC Video, \$49.95; VHS \$44.95)... Acorn Media presents four *LORD PETER WIMSEY* mysteries starring Ian Carmichael: *CLOUDS OF WITNESS*, *THE UNPLEASANTNESS AT THE BELLONA CLUB*, *THE NINE TAILORS*, and *FIVE RED HERRINGS*. Each two-disc set costs \$39.95, or \$59.95 on VHS. Three other Wimsey productions starring Edward Petherbridge—*STRONG POISON*, *HAVE HIS CARCASE*, and *GAUDY NIGHT*—are available in a three-disc set from BBC Video (\$59.95; VHS \$54.95)... A&E Home Video offers *POIROT: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION* (\$59.95; VHS \$49.95), which is far from complete, but does contain four fine feature-length episodes: *LORD EDGEWARE DIES*, *THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD*, *MURDER IN MESOPOTAMIA*, and *EVIL UNDER THE SUN*.

Pull a pint of ale and enjoy the first six *INSPECTOR MORSE* telefeatures, available in a boxed DVD set from Acorn Media for \$129.95. This and four other sets are offered on VHS for \$99.95 each. *THE REMORSEFUL DAY*, Morse's final case, can also be had on DVD and VHS (\$29.98 each)... P.D. James' *INSPECTOR DALGLIESH* was introduced to the small screen in 1985's *DEATH OF AN EXPERT WITNESS*, now available in a two-disc set from Lance Entertainment for \$39.95. This and five other multipart Dalgliesh dramas

can be purchased in VHS sets for \$49.95 each. Lance also offers a set of three feature-length *DICK FRANCIS MYSTERIES* starring Ian McShane and Patrick Macnee: *TWICE SHY*, *BLOOD SPORT*, and *IN THE FRAME* (\$29.95 for all three on DVD or VHS). And, last but not least, MPI Home Video offers all 13 episodes of Granada's *THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*—Jeremy Brett's premiere portrayals of The Great Detective—in a DVD boxed set for \$59.98.

Universal Home Video debuts a full caseload of TV detective series on DVD. Available in October are *LAW & ORDER: THE FIRST SEASON* (22 episodes on six discs for \$99.98) and *BARETTA: SEASON ONE*, starring the newsworthy Robert Blake (13 shows on three discs for \$39.98). Also planned for future DVD release are *MAGNUM P.I.*, *THE ROCKFORD FILES*, *EMERGENCY*, and—"Just the facts, ma'am"—the original *DRAGNET*. Universal caters to sci-fi fans as well, with upcoming DVD sets of *SLIDERS*, *QUANTUM LEAP*, *EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT*, and *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA*.

#### Fearsome Flotsam

"Oh, no, it wasn't the airplanes—it was Barbie killed the beast!" Everyone's favorite anatomically incorrect fashion doll debuts as Ann Darrow in a special edition entitled "Starring Barbie in *KING KONG*" (\$49.95). The platinum blonde retro-Barbie is posed in a Kong-sized hand, wearing a gown inspired by Fay Wray's attire in the film's climax. (The edition comes without a giant log, as does Ken.) Watch for it in toy stores nationwide, beginning in November.

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Gone, but never to be forgotten: singers Rosemary Clooney and William Warfield; musicians John Entwistle, Lionel Hampton, and Dee Dee Ramone (Douglas Colvin); musical directors Norman "Buddy" Baker and Peter Matz; Nancy Drew novelist Mildred Wirt Benson; authors Alexander Klein, Chaim Potok, and Barry C. Reed; illustrator Ron Walotsky; Disney animation director Ward Kimball; Hollywood mogul Lew Wasserman; screenwriters Herbert Finn, Stanley R. Greenberg, Robert L. Joseph, Joel Oliansky, and Dean Riesner; producers Albert Band, Herman Cohen, William P. D'Angelo, John Nathan-Turner, and Horst Wendlandt; directors John Frankenheimer, Peter Hunt, J. Lee Thompson, and Doris Wishman; actor/photographer Roy Dean; actors Tony Anholt, Peter Bayliss, Pat Coombs, James Gregory, Jeff Corey, Michael Greer, Maurice Denham, Josh Ryan Evans, Dolores Gray, Signe Hasso, Margaret Johnston, Katy Jurado, Whitney Blake, James Luisi, Leo McKern, Brian Pringle, Ted Ross, Carmen Silvera, Rod Steiger, Paul Tripp, Dermot Walsh, and Kim Hunter; and author, musician, and horror fan Randy Palmer.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via E-mail to [TheNewsHound@scarletstreet.com](mailto:TheNewsHound@scarletstreet.com).



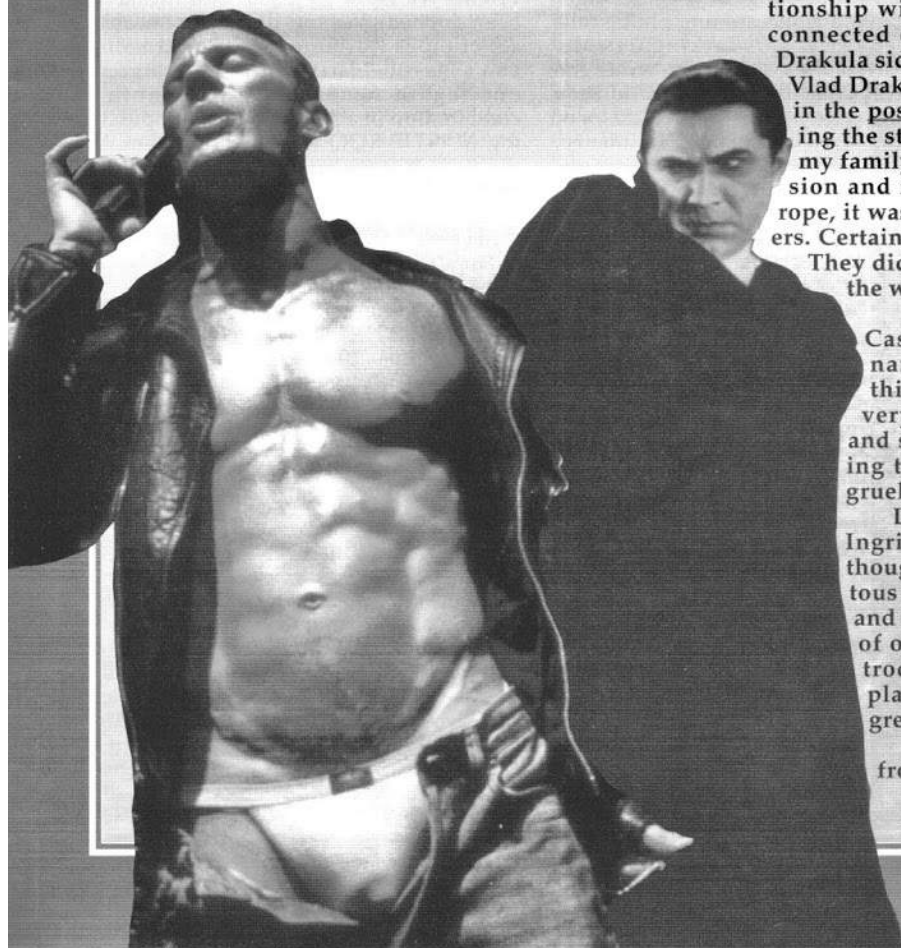


"Dracula is arguably the most famous name in the world. You can go to Eastern Korea and say 'Dracula' and they know exactly who you're talking about. You can't say 'Wolf Man' and expect any reaction—they won't get it!"

David Drake, actor in such films as *LONGTIME COMPANION* (1990), *PHILADELPHIA* (1993), and *NAKED IN NEW YORK* (1994), and winner of a *Village Voice* Obie Award for his 1992 play *THE NIGHT LARRY KRAMER KISSED ME*, ain't just whistling "Swan Lake"—his true name is Drakula, and his new autobiographical show, *SON OF DRAKULA*, is all about family. The one-man, multi-character production begins previews on Thursday, October 24, at New York's Dance Theater Workshop (212-924-0077), and officially opens on October 30—just in time for Halloween! *SON OF DRAKULA* is produced by Paul Lucas and directed by Chuck Brown.

The play is billed as "an absolutely true story," which brings a laugh from the handsome actor, though he insists "It is an absolutely true story. It's the story of my journey to the World Dracula Congress in Romania, in the Spring of 2001. I was invited to speak at the Congress, which consists of members of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula, a club interested in both the fictional and the actual Dracula, Vlad Drakul. They're academics and scholars, as well as Goths and horror movie stars—for instance, Ingrid Pitt, who starred in *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*. At the end of the play, I have a monologue about my great-grandfather, Pontilia Drakula, who came to this country 100 years ago on the S.S. Carpathia, the same ship that later carried the survivors of the Titanic. So Drakula came over on the Carpathia! It's ironic!"

Filmic Vampire Kings have traveled to the New World before (for instance, in the 1966 epic *BILLY THE KID VS DRACULA*), but rarely do they put down stakes in Maryland. David Drake's side of the family is an exception.



# A CHIP OFF THE Old Bat DAVID DRAKE

## Interview by Richard Valley

"I grew up in Baltimore; when my parents divorced, my mother moved us there. She changed our name, but not legally. Legally, I'm still David Drakula—David Drakula Jr., actually—but my mother wanted a clean break. She said, 'I'm sick of being the Bride of Drakula!'"

Often, a play shifts focus in the writing, as did *SON OF DRAKULA* for Drake. "It was a long time in the writing. I started the genealogical work about five years ago. It's very difficult to penetrate that area of the world for information; a lot has been lost. It took forever, but in the process what emerged—subconsciously, what I was doing—was that I was trying to find a more original relationship with my father, which had been estranged since the divorce. The play became a story about my relationship with my father, what we shared and how we connected or did not. Like most of my family on the Drakula side, he was not interested in its relationship to Vlad Drakul. Before he died, he came to be interested in the possibility, particularly when I started unearthing the story of my great-grandfather, which no one in my family knew. Their disinterest was based on confusion and fear and shame, because it was Eastern Europe, it was Communist, and they were poor coal miners. Certainly, the vampire connection gave them pause. They didn't understand it, nor did they disentangle it the way I did."

In the show, Drake recreates his visit to Castle Dracula. "It's real name is Fortress Poinari. It's actually not a castle, but it is something built by Vlad in the Carpathians. It's a very important scene in the play, with myself and some of the members of the Congress climbing the 114 steps to the top. Oh, my God, it was gruelling—and I'm a smoker, so it took hours!"

Drake got to know Hammer scream queen Ingrid Pitt well during his journey of discovery, though he doesn't recall her making that momentous climb. "We toured Romania together, Ingrid and her husband Tony, and myself and a bunch of other people. I do a monologue as Ingrid, introducing *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*. In fact, I play 30 characters from the World Dracula Congress and other places in Romania."

As it happens, *SON OF DRAKULA* is far from Drake's first onstage experience with the

*Continued on page 75*





## Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

**WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?/  
WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?**  
MGM Home Entertainment  
\$14.95

Taking a page from history and turning the page on a classic children's story, Curtis Harrington created two twisted seventies cinematic tales brought together on DVD by MGM as part of their magnificent Midnite Movies Double Feature discs. Sharing common ground with Alfred Hitchcock's *ROPE* (1948), Richard Fleischer's *COMPULSION* (1959), and Tom Kalin's *SWOON* (1992), *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?* (1971) melodramatically relates the tale of two mothers whose murderous sons bear an

uncanny resemblance to true-life killers Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb.

Attempting a fresh start, adopting new surnames, Helen and Adele (Shelley Winters and Debbie Reynolds, respectively) open a kiddie dance studio in thirties Hollywood. This impressive plot device allows Reynolds' Adele to imitate Jean Harlow, tap up a storm, and create one of this actress' finest characterizations. Having nothing in common except their sons' guilt, the ladies make for a strange set of housemates, and things only get stranger with anonymous threatening phone calls and creepy strangers lurking outside. Henry Farrell's screenplay (he wrote the 1960 novel *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*) tosses in even doses of

comedy, suspense, violence, and revival-style religion, which director Harrington deftly directs in a brisk manner, making this one a truly neglected gem.

Harrington makes great use of film convention as he bathes his leads in flattering amber lighting, stripping away any imperfections time has wrought on their facades. Able support is given by Dennis Weaver (as Reynolds' sugar daddy), Agnes Moorehead as an Aimee Semple McPherson-style revivalist preacher, and most significantly by Micheál MacLiammoir, whose character is the biggest canned ham this side of Hormel. (Yvette Vickers—she of 1959's *ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES*—puts in an appearance as a monstrous stage mother.)

An inadvertently humorous theatrical trailer is *HELEN*'s only special feature on

the DVD. The film itself looks quite good, faithfully recreating (filters and all) the problematic Eastman Color in which this stunningly macabre tale was filmed. Harrington's deliberately hazy, nostalgic look is appropriate for the material. Though some faded hues are present, they harken back to the golden age of moviemaking and early Technicolor, the era in which *HELEN* is set. Composer Johnny Mercer fares better with *HELEN* than he did with last year's *JEEPERS CREEPERS*; his 1935 standard, "Goody Goody," is used to truly creepy effect in an adventurous coup de cinema.

Flipping the disc, MGM presents a vibrant transfer of *WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* (1972), a cockeyed, darkly comic update of The Brothers Grimm's "Hansel and Gretel," featuring a gung-ho, tits to the wind performance from Shelley Winters. The star is delightfully over the top (even more so than in 1972's *THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE*) as a former vaudevillian who opens her majestic house yearly to 12 orphans, allowing them to experience a typically British Christmas. For you see, Auntie Roo has a secret: she lost her only daughter in a tragic magic accident, and yearly she seeks a replacement for that lost child. This particular year, she finds one in the form of Katy (Chloe Franks), who, with brother Christopher (Mark Lester), crash Auntie Roo's celebration.

*AUNTIE ROO* is most assuredly a curio, and despite its travesty of "Hansel and Gretel," remains highly original. Faring better vocally than *HELEN*'s Agnes Moorehead (whose singing of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" should have been dubbed), Winters displays a likeable set of pipes warbling Gilbert and Sullivan's classic, "Tit-Willow." Harrington once again comes up with a winning combination of actors and roles, populating *AUNTIE ROO* with several scions of the British stage and screen. Lionel Jeffries, Ralph Richardson, Rosalie Crutchley, and Hugh Griffith all deliver high caliber cameos.

For a moppet-in-danger film, *AUNTIE ROO* never falls into the same league as that other Shelley Winter feature, *THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER* (1955), but for its 90-minutes, the film more than delivers its share of chills, thrills, and laughter. MGM should be applauded for putting together this excellent entry in their Midnite Movies series.

—Anthony Dale

**THEM!**  
Warner Home Video  
\$19.98

"When man entered the atomic age, he opened a door into a new world. What we eventually find in that new world, nobody can predict." Hollywood was willing to give it a whirl anyhow, if such an endeavor could be made to translate into box office receipts. In 1953, Warner Bros. was the first to utilize the nuclear behemoth angle with a thawed-out dinosaur in *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS*.





The studio followed up with the king-sized ants of *THEM!* (1954), the first in a series of gigantic entomological mutations that would proliferate on America's drive-in movie screens in the fifties and become as closely identified with the decade as TV dinners and coonskin caps.

It's taken many years for *THEM!* to be recognized as a suspenseful, atmospheric, beautifully constructed classic that transcends utterly the genre it would spawn. Even today, it's unlikely that the majority



of our foremost film critics would be prepared to acknowledge its significance. Moving from the deserts of New Mexico, where a little girl (Sandy Descher) has been found wandering in a state of shock after witnessing her family's massacre by "them", to the catacomb of storm drains beneath Los Angeles, *THEM!* has all the trappings of a conventional monster movie (pretty girl in distress, beasties popping out from nowhere unexpectedly), but it unravels like a mystery and it's paced like a thriller. Both locations are milked for all they're worth, with the howling desert winds establishing a marvelously eerie, otherworldly mood (and providing as well a clever obfuscatory device for the screeching mega-ants prior to their visual introduction), and the sodden underground tunnels where the final confrontation occurs suggesting the fearsome claustrophobia of a subterranean ant colony. The Oscar-nominated special effects (the winner was 20,000 *LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*) were obviously costly and work on every level; arguments for the superiority of modern CGI effects are superfluous and belong on the polemical slag heap with criticism of films lacking sound, color, or widescreen.

The cast is led by James Whitmore (the cop) and James Arness (the FBI man) as a couple of average Jims who save the day whilst ogling the government scientist played by Joan Weldon. ("If she's the kind that takes care of sick people, I think I'll get a fever real quick!") Edmund Gwenn, as Weldon's fuddling "myrmecologist" father, is the standout, however, lending the scientific bantering credibility and otherwise sprucing things up with the blithe comedic touch he brought to such classics as *MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* (1947) and Hitchcock's *THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY* (1955).

The DVD of *THEM!* is a revelation, presenting a gorgeous, master-quality print that will undoubtedly exceed fan's expect-

tations. There couldn't have been much available to Warners in the way of extras, but they've dug up a few anyhow, with "behind the scenes" material consisting of effect setups and a gallery of stills. There's also an interactive text called "Bugged at the Movies" that chronicles the history of giant insect pictures. Supplements are accessible via a menu designed to resemble a supermarket tabloid.

—Jon Anthony Carr

#### **MAD MONSTER PARTY** Anchor Bay Entertainment \$19.98

Rankin/Bass are fondly remembered for their animated Christmas specials, but for many horror fans *MAD MONSTER PARTY* (1967) is the Rankin/Bass favorite. The duo's third and final feature film, it's also one of the major influences on *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS* (1993), and it now arrives on DVD to thrill another generation of monster fans.

Filmed in Animagic (stop-motion figure animation), *MAD MONSTER PARTY* begins with Baron Frankenstein (voiced by Boris Karloff) deciding to call it quits after discovering an extremely destructive liquid. The Baron hosts one final bash, inviting all his monster friends, plus his only living human relative, Felix Flanken (Allen Swift). Once all the guests arrive, the good doctor announces his retirement. The next day will bring the announcement that Felix is to be his heir.

Frankenstein's greatest creation and confidante, Francesca (Gale Garnett), already knows the plans for Felix and plots with Dracula (Mr. Swift again) to dispose of the young nerd so she can rule the monsters. The tides quickly change, and Francesca is a victim of a new consortium of Drac, Frankenstein's Monster, and the Monster's Mate (Phyllis Diller). After a failed escape attempt, Francesca discovers that Felix isn't such a bad guy. The two fall in love and decide to escape together. This isn't easy, since all the monsters (The Invisible Man, Mr. Hyde, The Creature, etc.) are now on the hunt for the two. The posse includes an uninvited arrival called "It." (Hint: he's the biggest of the classic monsters.) The monsters capture Francesca, leaving the Baron to save the day.

*MAD MONSTER PARTY* is a charming little flick, with lots to thrill the kiddies and plenty of snappy dialogue for the adults. It drags a little in spots, partially because two scenes were added to pad the running time, but it's still great fun. The voice actors all have a ball with the material, Karloff being a particular joy. Allen Swift provides every other male character, doing a spectacular job with voices ranging from Jimmy Stewart to Peter Lorre. The score is a jazzy confection that puts a nicely mature spin on the proceedings. The songs are all catchy little numbers, with the title tune and "Never Was a Love Like Mine" being two standouts. The animation is on par with Rankin/Bass' TV specials, and character designs are provided by Jack Davis of *Mad* magazine and EC Comics fame.

For most of its life, *MAD MONSTER PARTY* was only available on TV in scratchy, almost colorless prints. Restored from a 35mm source, this full-frame transfer blows previous versions out of the water. There's not a scratch or dust fleck and the colors leap off the screen in a rainbow of ghoulish hues. The mono sound is clear and strong. The animated menus capture the spirit of the film perfectly. The extras consist of two photo galleries, the theatrical trailer, and hidden trailers for Rankin/Bass' two other features—*THE DAYDREAMER* (1966) and *THE WACKY WORLD OF MOTHER GOOSE* (1967), both forthcoming from Anchor Bay. Also included is a 24-page booklet covering the production and release of the film. While informative, it is very poorly written, with sloppy sentence structure. That's no reason to avoid the DVD, so invite your own monster fiends



over, pop the disc in the player, and have a mad party of your very own.

—Ron Morgan

#### **I LOVE LUCY—Volume One and Two** Paramount/CBS Video \$14.99 each

Fans of *I LOVE LUCY* rejoice! Not only are classic *LUCY* available on VHS (from CBS Video Library), but they're now on DVD from Paramount/CBS Video. Volume One contains four of the earliest episodes, the first being the *I LOVE LUCY* pilot that started the whole phenomenon rolling. Lost footage of this 16mm film has been found—not in the most pristine shape, but it's still a treasure to behold. The pilot was sold to CBS, but never aired. Filmed on March 2, 1951, it began a lifelong love of Lucy.

"The Girls Want to Go to a Nightclub" (10/15/51) features Lucy Ricardo and Ethel Mertz (Lucille Ball and Vivian Vance, in case you're new to this planet) trying to get husband Ricky and Fred (Desi Arnaz and William Frawley, in case, etc.) to take them to a nightclub for Fred and Ethel's anniversary. In other words, it's "hare-brained scheme" time! "Be a Pal" (10/22/51) highlights Lucy trying to spice up her marriage with Ricky by adding a Cuban



flair to their home. The episode features Lucy's famous Carmen Miranda impersonation. (Ball actually asked Carmen herself for permission to impersonate her.) "The Diet" (10/29/51) sees Lucy desperate to be in one of Ricky's nightclub shows, so much so that she diets herself into malnutrition.

Special features include scene selections for each episode, featured songs ("Babalu" and "Cuban Pete"), the series' original opening, and much more.

Volume Two kicks off with "Lucy Thinks Ricky Is Trying to Murder Her" (11/5/51), and the title tells it all. In "The Quiz Show" (11/12/51), Lucy tries to earn money to pay the household expenses. "The Audition Show" (11/19/51) is actually based on the unaired pilot. This restored version includes the scene in which Lucy holds up a pack of Philip Morris cigarettes (their sponsor), which was cut when the show went into syndication and is seen here for the first time since 1956. In "The Seance" (11/26/51), Lucy and Ethel dabble in the world of the supernatural.

Liner notes are sparse. The DVD transfers are almost fault free. Extras include behind-the-scenes shots, flubs, restorations, musical enhancements, featured



Allan Poe series or Roger Corman, this is a must-have DVD. You may actually learn something, as I did, about Corman's absolute mastery of style on a limited budget within a well planned formula.

It's not difficult to understand why *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* is generally considered the high point of the series and perhaps Corman's directorial career. The sparkling transfer of gorgeous elements overwhelms the eye with Daniel Haller's color-coordinated sets (you will inhabit the blazing purple, yellow, and crimson rooms), Nicolas Roeg's frequently travelling camera, and the lavish period costumes. All of this is at the service of a hard-worked adaptation (incorporating Poe's "Hop Toad") by Charles Beaumont and R. Wright Campbell, which often evokes poetry more than conventional narration. Price's Prince Prospero especially impresses as a complex consideration of a man fascinated by his own capacity for evil. His concern for the fate of the innocent Francesca (Jane Asher) even suggests that this is a basically good man who has surrendered to an all-consuming curiosity. Corman speaks of the influence of Bergman's *THE SEVENTH SEAL* (1958) in the accompanying interview, and if that's already obvious, then this high-quality presentation suggests that he perhaps succeeded in transcending his master. Hazel Court, Skip Martin, and the estimable Patrick Magee lend solid support as Prospero's dubious associates in pleasure and death.

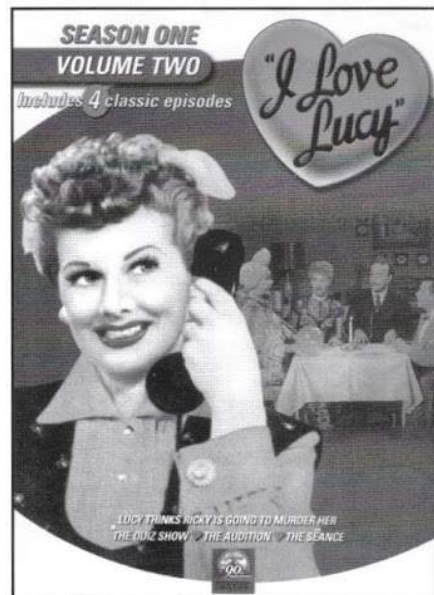
Side B of the disc contains what for me was the real revelation. *THE PREMATURE BURIAL* (onscreen title: *PREMATURE BURIAL*) has always been the most underestimated of the Corman Poes, a notion which this restored, widescreen presentation confirms. As Corman himself explains, the film was his attempt to break away from AIP after some "accounting" questions arose concerning the considerable profits from *HOUSE OF USHER* (1960) and *PIT AND THE PENDULUM* (1961). The producer/director took the

project to Pathé, only to discover that the wily Arkoff and Nicholson bought the studio out from under him. The understandable absence of Vincent Price resulted in the fortuitous casting of Oscar-winner Ray Milland in the lead role of the obsessed Guy Carrell, an artist living in mortal fear of being buried alive. Milland, as Corman points out, was more of a Romantic leading man than a character actor like Price. The actor invests his role with all the psychological torments called for by Poe, but does so with a suave subtlety which is miles away from the Grand Guignol theatrics of Price in *PIT AND THE PENDULUM*. (Hazel Court is also admirably restrained as Guy's wife, Emily.) What results is a uniquely satisfying psychological melodrama that highlights the pre-Freudian insights of Poe into the workings of the paranoid unconscious.

Daniel Haller's ingenious setting for Guy's escape-friendly tomb is especially impressive in its chilling detail. The opening and closings shots of the mist-bound cemetery demonstrate Corman's talent for visualizing the ironic consequences of mental illness. The claustrophobic settings, the brown-blue color design (with just a touch of red indicating danger), and the expert cast all click in a classic example on how to do Poe the right way.

Priced at \$14.95 for two movies, this double feature represents what could be the first volley in the battle for downward ticketing of high quality, "loaded" DVD presentations of sought-after genre titles.

—Robert Monell



songs ("Babalu" and "Cuban Pete"), the series' original opening, and voiceovers.

These DVDs are a must for all I LOVE LUCY fans and can be enjoyed over and over again, just like the reruns—only looking better than the reruns ever did!

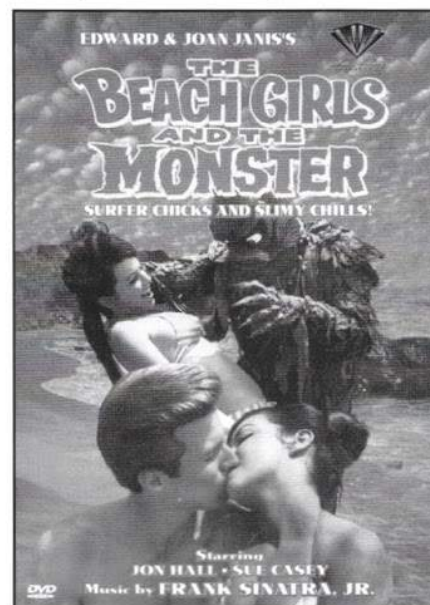
—Dan Clayton

#### **THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH/ THE PREMATURE BURIAL** MGM Home Entertainment \$14.95

MGM's Midnite Movies double feature presentation of Roger Corman's *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* (1964) and *THE PREMATURE BURIAL* (1962) is something of a stunning knockout punch in DVD packaging and pricing. Even if you're not a big fan of the AIP Edgar

#### **THE BEACH GIRLS AND THE MONSTER** Image Entertainment \$24.99

Surf's up for that most reactionary of all sixties beach films, *THE BEACH GIRLS AND THE MONSTER* (1964/65). Jon Hall portrays Dr. Otto Lindsey, a Santa Mon-





ica oceanographer who casts a withering eye at the surfing, dancing, guitar strumming, in-love-with-life teenagers who populate "his" beach. His continual pontificating against their "trampy" lifestyle only drive his son Richard (Arnold Lesing) further in their direction. Lindsey's second wife, Vicki (Sue Casey), is a lush who delights in propositioning other men, including Richard's friend Mark (Walker Edmiston), a crippled sculptor.

The slaughter of a young woman by an alleged sea creature does little to curtail the teens' activities; soon enough, they're back partying on the shore until way after dark. Richard's treacly ballad "More Than Wanting You" is deftly upstaged by the uptempo duet "There's a Monster in the Surf," performed by his girlfriend Jane (Elaine DuPont) and a lion puppet named Kingsley. The ersatz rock 'n' roll strikes an unresponsive chord with the monster, who trashes the good vibrations by bloodying his claws with another victim. Two investigating policemen (one of whom shouts his dialogue as though the other characters are hearing-impaired) theorize that the culprit may not be of supernatural origin. Somebody's responsible, but who? The curmudgeonly oceanographer? The crippled plaster-caster? Kingsley the lion?

THE BEACH GIRLS AND THE MONSTER, while never thrilling, serves up plenty of low-budget amusements. The monster costume vaguely suggests the Creature From the Black Lagoon garbed in a seaweed boa. That the film's climax displays the unmasked perpetrator driving hellbent through the Hollywood Hills while sporting the Neptunian bodysuit elicits more titters than chills, but beach flick completists won't complain a bit.

Director/cinematographer/star Jon Hall had achieved matinee idol status in THE HURRICANE (1937), parlaying that success into a procession of starring roles in pictures with nautical or fantasy themes. BEACH GIRLS must have seemed like an appropriate comeback vehicle, but its impoverished production prevented it from catching the wave enjoyed by American International's Beach Party series. Hall engaged the services of Frank Sinatra Jr., who contributed a flavorful surf music score that turned ominous whenever the monster was afoot. Young Blue Eyes also coauthored the toe-tapping "Dance Baby Dance" that accompanies the opening credit crawl.

Image's DVD offers the film in a wide-screen (1.85:1) format that adds some picture information to the sides while sacrificing nothing important from the top and bottom. Occasional visual scratches are evident, but the black-and-white contrasts are superior to existing TV editions (entitled MONSTER FROM THE SURF). The disc's source material is entirely monochromatic, whereas Wade Williams' earlier VHS release presented stock surfing footage in color, as was planned for theatrical exhibition. Supplements include a campy full-frame trailer, an extensive gallery of behind-the-scenes stills,

and a screenplay excerpt that's accessible on a computer/DVD drive.

—John F. Black

**CURSE OF THE DEMON/  
NIGHT OF THE DEMON**  
Columbia/TriStar Home Video  
\$24.95

Few films capture the supernatural with such power and subtlety as NIGHT OF THE DEMON (1957), released in the USA in truncated form as CURSE OF THE DEMON. While Jacques Tourneur (who directed 1942's CAT PEOPLE, 1943's LEO-



PARD MAN, and 1943's I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE for producer Val Lewton) worked in nearly every genre, his finest moments occur in his horror films.

Producer Hal Chester's decision to override Tourneur's Lewton-derived aesthetic by disclosing the monster in the first reel has been decried both by Tourneur fans and the director himself. Nonetheless, I favor Chester's judgment; the colossal, slaving fire demon, swathed in smoke and flame, creates a sense of impending danger that propels the film through to its infernal crescendo.

As the devil-worshiper Dr. Julian Karswell, Niall MacGinnis (1963's JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS) radiates a corruption born of absolute power—an evil so profound that his genteel facade is something of an amusement. The repartee of skeptic Dr. John Holden (Dana Andrews, cast in the British production to assure Stateside sales) and the more credulous Joanna Harrington (Welsh-born Peggy Cummins, who set the screen afire in 1949's GUN CRAZY) fails to generate the spark of a Nick and Nora Charles, but the supporting cast—Athene Seyler as Karswell's dotty mother; Irish actor Reginald Beckwith as the psychic, Mr. Meek; Brian Wilde as the hypnotic interrogation subject—is impeccable.

Screenwriter Charles Bennett was one of Hitchcock's primary British collaborators on THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1934), THE 39 STEPS (1935), SABOTAGE (1936), YOUNG AND INNOCENT (1937), and FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (1940). (Hal Chester's shared writing credit is said to have been an at-

tempt to keep Bennett from having his own name removed from the film, Bennett—like Tourneur—being opposed to the explicit portrayal of the demon.) Bennett both expands and tightens the M.R. James short story, "Casting the Runes" (1904), providing dialogue laced with dark humor and rich with philosophical resonance. Here, magic is a kind of alternative science, bound in its own inalterable laws. "You get nothing for nothing," Dr. Karswell admonishes his mother on the price of magic.

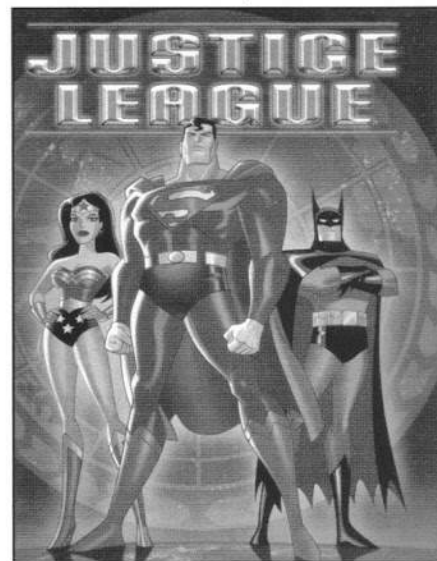
Repeated viewing reveals layer upon layer of encoded imagery—the firelight flickering on Karswell's face underscoring his connection with the fire demon; the torn jacket Karswell wears when performing as a magician foreshadowing a grisly fate; the foreboding lion-rampant sculpture that guards Karswell's estate; art deco griffins on the lamp in Holden's hotel room; the tessellated floor pattern of Karswell's foyer, which makes the characters seem like pawns, manipulated by unseen powers.

The 16:9-enhanced, 1.66:1 transfer is sharp, richly textured, and free of digital artifacts. White flecking on the opening reel is highly obtrusive, given Tourneur's extensive use of deep shadow. Both the 95-minute UK version and the 82-minute American cut have been given 28 chapters. As the two versions are encoded on separate layers, shuttling between them is impossible. Optional subtitles (in English, French, and Japanese) help clarify British slang. The long-deleted Columbia laserdisc has traded at \$400; Columbia/TriStar's DVD delivers far greater value.

—Michael Draine

**JUSTICE LEAGUE**  
Warner Home Video  
\$19.98

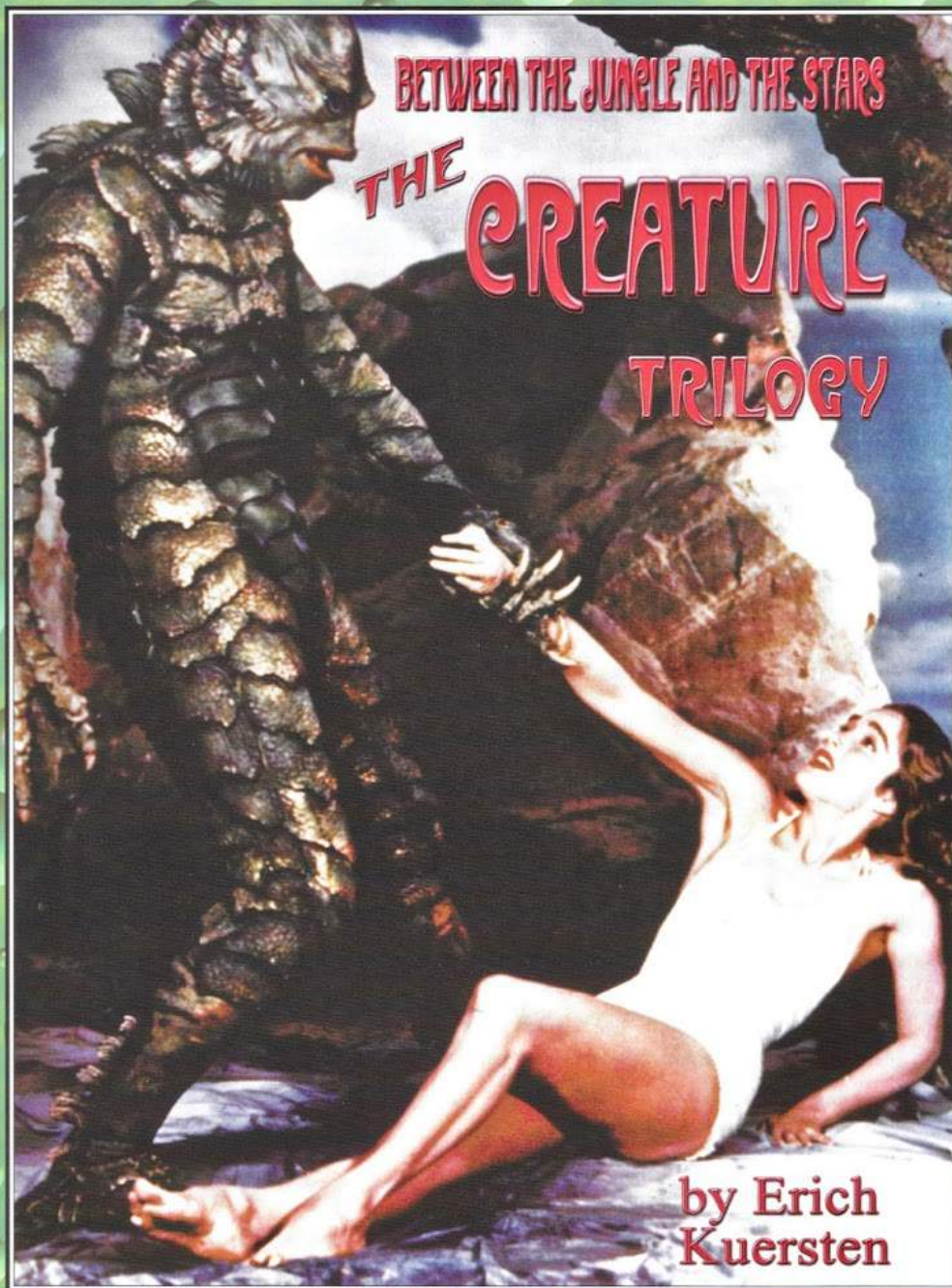
The Warner Bros. animation team has outdone themselves with JUSTICE LEAGUE.



As wonderful as the Batman and Superman animated series are, the possibilities

Continued on page 66





The Creature from the Black Lagoon—the only monster of the 1950s to warrant even one sequel, much less two—was the missing link not just between man and fish, but between such classic “human” Universal fiends as the Monster of FRANKENSTEIN (1931) and the later aquatic horrors of JAWS (1976) and ANACONDA (1997). Unlike any monster before or since, the Gill Man’s struggle through his three films—CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954), REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955), and THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US (1956)—has a definite narrative arc. It can be seen as a mythic journey of tragedy and transcendence that works as a parallel to American society’s own journey toward the enlightenment of environmentalist awareness, which began in the early fifties and reached a new height with the celebration of the first Earth Day in 1971. Thanks to such forward-thinkers as producer William Alland, writer Arthur Ross, and director Jack Arnold, the Creature Trilogy endures today both as a chronicle of our collective journey from the past into the future, and as a mirror held up to man’s self-destructive fear of the unknown. Through these films, we see that it is fear—as old as the cave-men shuddering at unexplained noises in the night—that is the motive behind man’s wanton destruction of nature. The story of the Gill Man mirrors the Celtic legend of “the Green Man,” the personification of nature, whose smile is seen in the leaves of trees, and who looks out from all vegetation with a mischievous wink. Nature is given a human face, and vice versa, in the legend. In the saga of the Creature, scientists travel to the heart of nature—the womblike Black Lagoon—and end up causing destruction to both themselves and the environment in their efforts to control and capture this elementary force.

It was as a dinner guest of Orson Welles in the 1930s that William Alland originally heard the legend of a man-fish that lived in the Amazon. The idea later took root for the original story, with Alland envisioning the beast more as a romantic mer-creature than as a homicidal missing link with romantic tendencies. Thanks to a story that passed through the non-pandering pen of screenwriter Arthur Ross and the capable directorial hands of Jack Arnold, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON emerged with breathing room for symbolism and social commentary as well as weird romance and horror thrills. The first two films in the trilogy were shot in 3-D and therefore contain many “com-in’ at ya” moments that must have wowed ‘em in the theaters, but are less than overwhelming on video or DVD. Luckily, the thoughtfulness and care with which the films were made has ensured the transcendence of this conceivable handicap. They are classics of the genre, smoldering with timeless energy. The Creature himself remains one of the most memorable monsters in the history of film. Perhaps due to there being a feminine hand (Millicent Patrick’s) in his design, he has a baroque beauty that in no way impedes on his fright value, but instead adds a whole extra layer of pathos and resonance to what might have been just another fish story. We see the beauty in the beast, and as a result the images of him swimming beneath a beautiful woman or carrying her through the catacombs have a primal, mythic power.

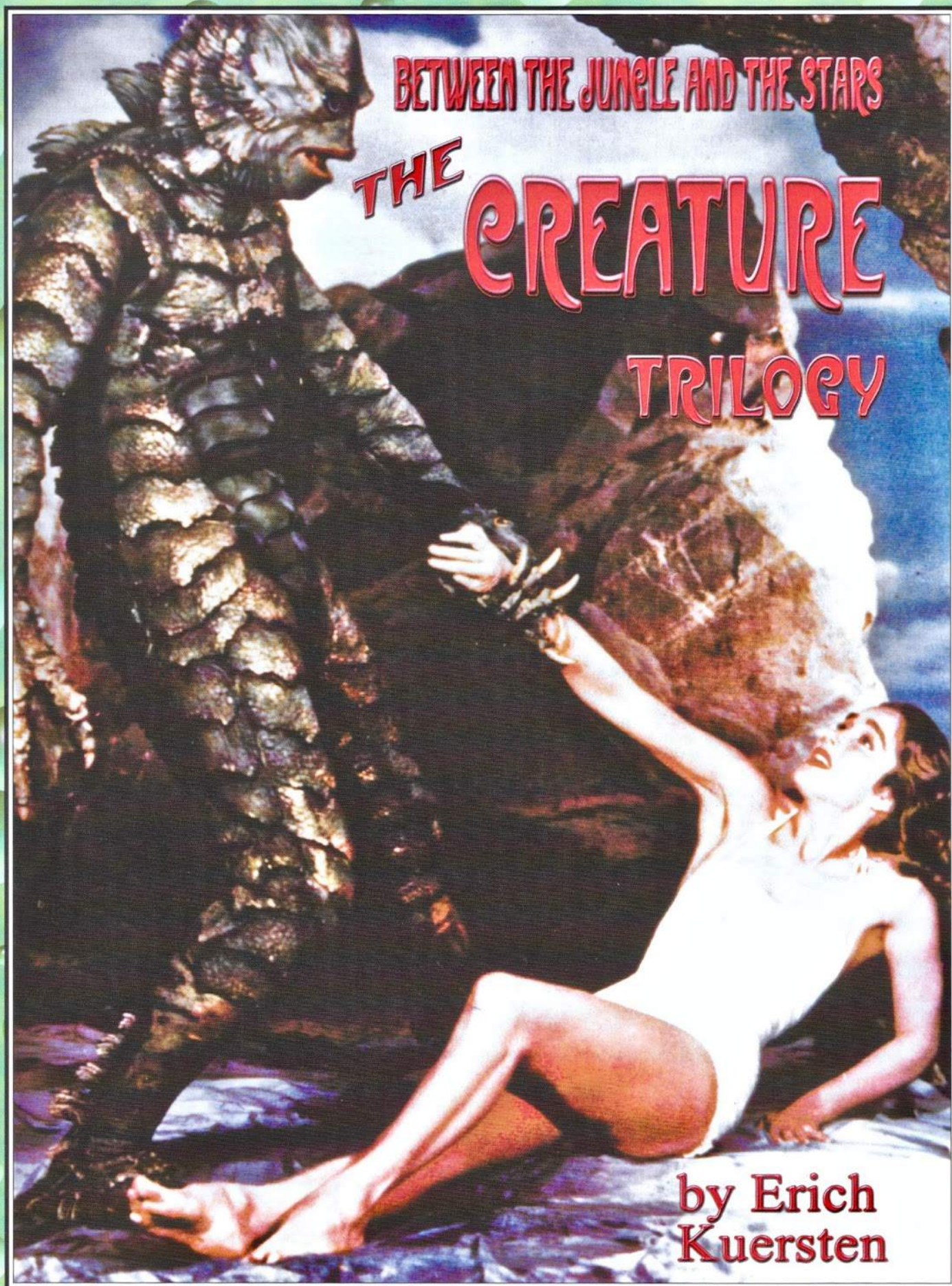
The early fifties must have seemed to be “a crossroads between the jungle and the stars” (as a character in THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US puts it). The postwar prosperity of a car in every garage and a TV in every living room brushed uneasily against new threats. Yes, there was the general “duck and cover” anxiety of atomic annihilation, but there was also the real, noticeable effect of pollution. Unchecked industrial production saved civilization when it was racing to build up arms against the Axis military, but now it was time for industry to reign it in, or else choke on its own deadly fumes. As early as 1951, campaigns began to be waged by The Sierra Club to save canyons from being flooded by dams. In 1952, London was hit by deadly smog that killed and injured thousands of people, leading to Great Britain’s Clean Air Act; the Water Pollution Control Act soon followed. The Keep America Beautiful organization formed in 1953, saturating the airwaves and streets with public service announcements. Conservation was entering public consciousness in a big way; the concept of our own appetites as an enemy was brand new, exciting even; a liberating antidote to the Red Scare, the rabid hysterics of which by 1954 was beginning to embarrass even the most conservative Americans. It was in 1954—the year CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON was released—that the nationally televised Army/McCarthy hearings were held, and even right-wing viewers were forced to admit that the senator was a rabid hate-monger. “Tail-gunner” Joe McCarthy was censured by the Senate that December, and died a few years later, of alcohol-related illness. Meanwhile, at the local bistro, such thoughtful and thought-provoking science fiction pictures as THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951) and IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE (1953) warned that fear and mob mentality were worse enemies than any Communist threat. It was all congealing in the American mind, a dawning awareness of our susceptibility to conformity, a realization that we were our own worst enemy. As cartoonist Walt Kelly put it in his introduction to The Pogo Papers (1951-53), “We shall meet the enemy, and not only may he be ours, he may be us.” This phrase, shortened



to “We have met the enemy and he is us,” became the tag line for the first Earth Day Poster (1971).

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The Creature from the Black Lagoon—the only monster of the 1950s to warrant even one sequel, much less two—was the missing link not just between man and fish, but between such classic “human” Universal fiends as the Monster of FRANKENSTEIN (1931) and the later aquatic horrors of JAWS (1976) and ANACONDA (1997). Unlike any monster before or since, the Gill Man’s struggle through his three films—CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954), REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955), and THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US (1956)—has a definite narrative arc. It can be seen as a mythic journey of tragedy and transcendence that works as a parallel to American society’s own journey toward the enlightenment of environmentalist awareness, which began in the early fifties and reached a new height with the celebration of the first Earth Day in 1971. Thanks to such forward-thinkers as producer William Alland, writer Arthur Ross, and director Jack Arnold, the Creature Trilogy endures today both as a chronicle of our collective journey from the past into the future, and as a mirror held up to man’s self-destructive fear of the unknown. Through these films, we see that it is fear—as old as the cavemen shuddering at unexplained noises in the night—that is the motive behind man’s wanton destruction of nature. The story of the Gill Man mirrors the Celtic legend of “the Green Man,” the personification of nature, whose smile is seen in the leaves of trees, and who looks out from all vegetation with a mischievous wink. Nature is given a human face, and vice versa, in the legend. In the saga of the Creature, scientists travel to the heart of nature—the womblike Black Lagoon—and end up causing destruction to both themselves and the environment in their efforts to control and capture this elementary force.

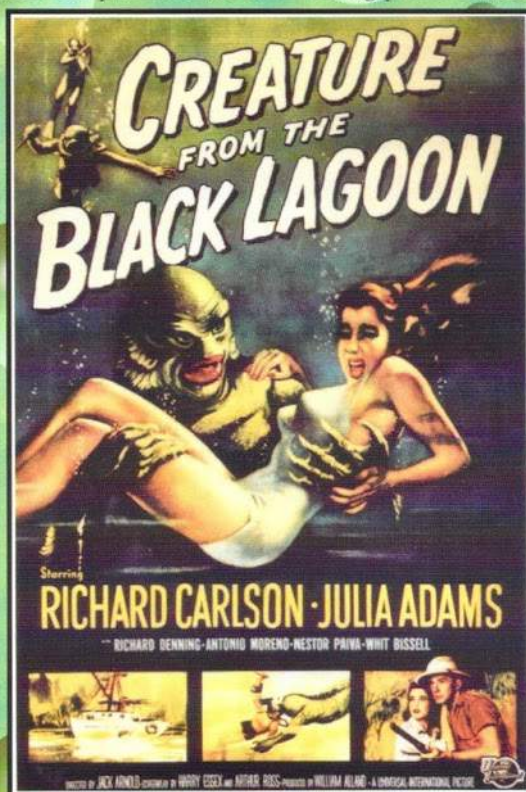
It was as a dinner guest of Orson Welles in the 1930s that William Alland originally heard the legend of a man-fish that lived in the Amazon. The idea later took root for the original story, with Alland envisioning the beast more as a romantic mer-creature than as a homicidal missing link with romantic tendencies. Thanks to a story that passed through the non-pandering pen of screenwriter Arthur Ross and the capable directorial hands of Jack Arnold, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON emerged with breathing room for symbolism and social commentary as well as weird romance and horror thrills. The first two films in the trilogy were shot in 3-D and therefore contain many “comin’ at ya” moments that must have wowed ‘em in the theaters, but are less than overwhelming on video or DVD. Luckily, the thoughtfulness and care with which the films were made has ensured the transcendence of this conceivable handicap. They are classics of the genre, smoldering with timeless energy. The Creature himself remains one of the most memorable monsters in the history of film. Perhaps due to there being a feminine hand (Millicent Patrick’s) in his design, he has a baroque beauty that in no way impedes on his fright value, but instead adds a whole extra layer of pathos and resonance to what might have been just another fish story. We see the beauty in the beast, and as a result the images of him swimming beneath a beautiful woman or carrying her through the catacombs have a primal, mythic power.

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Julie Adams has never been one to cry over spilled milk. From her first acting experience—where a quick-thinking Betty May saved the play—through a series of Lippert Westerns, signing with Universal Studios as a contract player, two marriages to industry colleagues, and assorted film, stage, and television work, Adams has enjoyed a career spanning over seven decades with few regrets—even if that means being forever and inextricably linked with her most famous role, as Kay Lawrence, female member of the Rita scientific expedition through the darkest of South American jungles. Destination: The Black Lagoon. Target: The Amazonian Gill Man.

Shot over a span of eight weeks on the Universal back lot in the fall of 1953, *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* held little more than passing interest to Adams on receiving the role, assigned to her by studio bosses eager to display their talent's physicality inside a custom-made white bathing suit destined to send hearts-a-thumping all the way to the box office. And it worked—*CREATURE* became a smash hit for the near-bankrupt studio, once again proving that Universal and monsters were a combination unsurpassed. Julie and her would-be boyfriend were destined to be forever immortalized in fans' hearts, pictures, posters, books, magazines, T-shirts, toys, and model kits—a phenomenon that continues today as the film approaches its 50th anniversary. With an insatiable passion, emblematic of the Gill Man's lust for Kay, the thirst for the movie lives on.

Julie Adams continued acting well into the early 1990s, playing parts opposite James Stewart (pictured left with J. C. Flippen, Frances Bavier, and the Gill Man's second girlfriend, Lori Nelson, in 1952's *BEND OF THE RIVER*), Donald O'Connor, John Wayne, Dennis Hopper, and even Elvis Presley along the way, until the call of grandchildren and memoirs of Arkansas proved stronger than any offered role. Still, she was happy to talk with *Scarlet Street* about her decades-spanning career, provided we promised not to give the Gill Man her phone number. She's still fine with just being friends....



*Scarlet Street:* How did Betty May Adams, raised in Arkansas without any lineage to the silver screen, decide to become an actress?

**Julie Adams:** My father was a cotton buyer, so we lived in a lot of small cotton towns. I lived in Blytheville, a town of about 10,000 people, for the longest time. When I was in the third grade, I was in a school play of *HANSEL AND GRETEL*. I can remember the moment when the milk spilled too early and I ad-libbed and saved the day. (Laughs) I felt this flush of power and thought, "This is wonderful!" From that, I had this idea—even living in

these small cotton towns—that I wanted to be an actress, which was pretty odd considering my surroundings.

**SS:** Did you parents support the idea?

**JA:** No one took it too seriously. When I was in junior high in Blytheville, the school bandleader's wife taught something called "expression" lessons. I studied with her. I learned long monologues and inflicted them on the ladies clubs in town. (Laughs) Also, when I was in junior high, a friend of mine—Francis-Sue Bright—and I saved up some money and got tickets to see the Lunts in *THERE*

*SHALL BE NO NIGHT*. Blytheville was about 75 miles from Memphis. We were going to a home economics conference in Forrest City that weekend—I cared very little for home economics—and were going to stop in Memphis on the way back. Well, it started raining like mad and we missed the whole first act! When we finally climbed way up in the balcony, it was wonderful, but the memory is connected with the smell of the drying wool of my coat and squishy shoes. That was my first taste of live theater.

**SS:** Rather a soggy one!

# BATHING BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JULIE ADAMS

interviewed by Michael Michalski

**JA:** Then, when I was 15, my father passed and we moved to Little Rock. I took drama classes and never gave up the idea of being an actress. Later, I decided to come to California to try my luck.

**SS:** Did you make the trip by yourself?

**JA:** By myself. I had kind of an aunt, a family friend who lived in Long Beach, and she offered to help me. It was quite an adventure, of course. I did get a few interviews with some talent scouts at the studios. The first thing they said was, "You have to lose your accent." And I said, "What aaks-sint?" (Laughs) Back then, you really didn't get too far if you had a particular accent. They said I should study with a coach, so I got the name of a coach. My Aunt Ruth knew a young woman who worked for her who lived in Hollywood, and I shared an apartment with her. I worked three days a week as a secretary and rode the bus to get my lessons. So there you are—my humble beginnings!

**SS:** Your first film was *RED, HOT AND BLUE* in 1949, starring Betty Hutton.

**JA:** That was just a series of stills that were used the film, not really a role. I got that as a result of going around to the talent scouts.

**SS:** What do you recall of your first experiences on a Hollywood soundstage?

**JA:** The first day I went to the 20th Century Fox lot. I walked right past Jeanne Crain, who was so gorgeous that I felt completely intimidated! I thought, "What am I doing here? I'd better run back to Arkansas fast where I had a job at the State Capitol for \$20 a week!"

**SS:** Your first actual role on screen was in 1949's *THE DALTON GANG*.

**JA:** *THE DALTON GANG* was the first quickie Western I did for the Lippert Company. I did a series of six Westerns that we shot in five weeks. I was "the girl" in all of them. I was somebody different in every movie, even though I only had four changes of wardrobe, but I was basically "the girl." We shot all the stagecoach scenes at once—I kept thinking, "Am I the banker's daughter? Am I the farmer's daughter? Who am I here?" (Laughs) But they were great experience, because you got too tired to care about the camera. The movies themselves were no big deal. They did them fast, over and out!

**SS:** The films were directed by Tommy Carr, who later went on to direct several different *Superman* projects both on film and TV.

**JA:** He was lots of fun and very easy to work for, really. There was so little time that there was never any nonsense. It was all very pleasant, though it was tiring.

**SS:** Did you work 12-hour days?

**JA:** They were longer than that! I did my makeup at home and I was out on location by 6AM. We shot mostly at Iverson's Ranch, and then we shot the rest on a little soundstage in Hollywood for the last week.

**SS:** Had you known how to ride a horse before making your first Westerns?

(Laughs) They had to heave me into the saddle! I was waiting around the bend, and Tommy Carr yelled, "Action!" and I gave my horse a good kick—well, we went off like a shot! We came flying 'round and I think we'd still be going if there hadn't been a mountain in the way! (Laughs) Tommy said, "Well, let's do it again. Next time, you don't have to come quite so fast." So that was my first day on those Westerns.

**SS:** It's funny, of course, but there was also an element of danger. Do you recall any particular mishaps during these shoots?

**JA:** When they asked me if I could ride, I said, "Sure!" We'd always say we could do it no matter what they asked us. I went out to Griffith Park and took riding lessons. Of course, you have to give rental horses a great, big kick to get them to move. I thought, "When I get on location, I'll have time to ride a bit, to get used to the horse." But, that was not to be—my first shot was of me riding 'round the bend. I see all the bad guys riding toward me and turn back toward town to warn everybody. Well, first of all, it was rather humiliating, because the leather pants they fitted me in from Western Costume were so tight I could barely get on the horse!



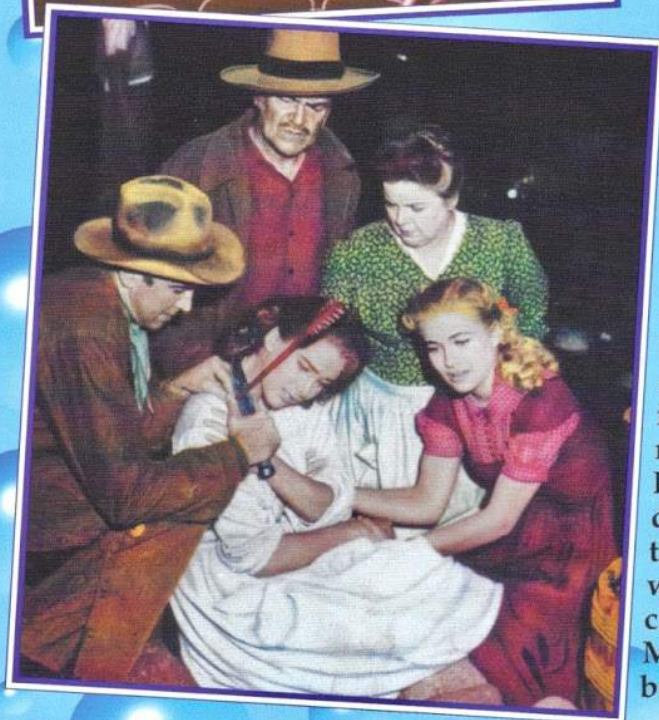




**J**ulie Adams has never been one to cry over spilt milk. From her first acting experience—where a quick-thinking Betty May saved the play—through a series of Lippert Westerns, signing with Universal Studios as a contract player, two marriages to industry colleagues, and assorted film, stage, and television work, Adams has enjoyed a career spanning over seven decades with few regrets—even if that means being forever and inextricably linked with her most famous role, as Kay Lawrence, female member of the Rita scientific expedition through the darkest of South American jungles. Destination: The Black Lagoon. Target: The Amazonian Gill Man.

Shot over a span of eight weeks on the Universal back lot in the fall of 1953, *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* held little more than passing interest to Adams on receiving the role, assigned to her by studio bosses eager to display their talent's physicality inside a custom-made white bathing suit destined to send hearts-a-thumping all the way to the box office. And it worked—*CREATURE* became a smash hit for the near-bankrupt studio, once again proving that Universal and monsters were a combination unsurpassed. Julie and her would-be boyfriend were destined to be forever immortalized in fans' hearts, pictures, posters, books, magazines, T-shirts, toys, and model kits—a phenomenon that continues today as the film approaches its 50th anniversary. With an insatiable passion, emblematic of the Gill Man's lust for Kay, the thirst for the movie lives on.

Julie Adams continued acting well into the early 1990s, playing parts opposite James Stewart (pictured left with J. C. Flippen, Frances Bavier, and the Gill Man's second girlfriend, Lori Nelson, in 1952's *BEND OF THE RIVER*), Donald O'Connor, John Wayne, Dennis Hopper, and even Elvis Presley along the way, until the call of grandchildren and memoirs of Arkansas proved stronger than any offered role. Still, she was happy to talk with *Scarlet Street* about her decades-spanning career, provided we promised not to give the Gill Man her phone number. She's still fine with just being friends . . .



*Scarlet Street:* How did Betty May Adams, raised in Arkansas without any lineage to the silver screen, decide to become an actress?

**Julie Adams:** My father was a cotton buyer, so we lived in a lot of small cotton towns. I lived in Blytheville, a town of about 10,000 people, for the longest time. When I was in the third grade, I was in a school play of *HANSEL AND GRETEL*. I can remember the moment when the milk spilled too early and I ad-libbed and saved the day. (Laughs) I felt this flush of power and thought, "This is wonderful!" From that, I had this idea—even living in

these small cotton towns—that I wanted to be an actress, which was pretty odd considering my surroundings.

**SS:** Did you parents support the idea?

**JA:** No one took it too seriously. When I was in junior high in Blytheville, the school bandleader's wife taught something called "expression" lessons. I studied with her. I learned long monologues and inflicted them on the ladies clubs in town. (Laughs) Also, when I was in junior high, a friend of mine—Francis-Sue Bright—and I saved up some money and got tickets to see the Lunts in *THERE*

*SHALL BE NO NIGHT*. Blytheville was about 75 miles from Memphis. We were going to a home economics conference in Forrest City that weekend—I cared very little for home economics—and were going to stop in Memphis on the way back. Well, it started raining like mad and we missed the whole first act! When we finally climbed way up in the balcony, it was wonderful, but the memory is connected with the smell of the drying wool of my coat and squishy shoes. That was my first taste of live theater.

**SS:** Rather a soggy one!



# BATHING BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JULIE ADAMS

interviewed by Michael Michalski

**JA:** Then, when I was 15, my father passed and we moved to Little Rock. I took drama classes and never gave up the idea of being an actress. Later, I decided to come to California to try my luck.

**SS:** Did you make the trip by yourself?

**JA:** By myself. I had kind of an aunt, a family friend who lived in Long Beach, and she offered to help me. It was quite an adventure, of course. I did get a few interviews with some talent scouts at the studios. The first thing they said was, "You have to lose your accent." And I said, "What aaks-sint?" (Laughs) Back then, you really didn't get too far if you had a particular accent. They said I should study with a coach, so I got the name of a coach. My Aunt Ruth knew a young woman who worked for her who lived in Hollywood, and I shared an apartment with her. I worked three days a week as a secretary and rode the bus to get my lessons. So there you are—my humble beginnings!

**SS:** Your first film was *RED, HOT AND BLUE* in 1949, starring Betty Hutton.

**JA:** That was just a series of stills that were used the film, not really a role. I got that as a result of going around to the talent scouts.

**SS:** What do you recall of your first experiences on a Hollywood soundstage?

**JA:** The first day I went to the 20th Century Fox lot, I walked right past Jeanne Crain, who was so gorgeous that I felt completely intimidated! I thought, "What am I doing here? I'd better run back to Arkansas fast where I had a job at the State Capital for \$20 a week!"

**SS:** Your first actual role on screen was in 1949's *THE DALTON GANG*.

**JA:** *THE DALTON GANG* was the first quickie Western I did for the Lippert Company. I did a series of six Westerns that we shot in five weeks. I was "the girl" in all of them. I was somebody different in every movie, even though I only had four changes of wardrobe, but I was basically "the girl." We shot all the stagecoach scenes at once, all the farmhouse scenes at once—I kept thinking, "Am I the banker's daughter? Am I the farmer's daughter? Who am I here?" (Laughs) But they were great experience, because you got too tired to care about the camera. The movies themselves were no big deal. They did them fast, over and out!

**SS:** The films were directed by Tommy Carr, who later went on to direct several different Superman projects both on film and TV.

**JA:** He was lots of fun and very easy to work for, really. There was so little time that there was never any nonsense. It was all very pleasant, though it was tiring.

**SS:** Did you work 12-hour days?

**JA:** They were longer than that! I did my makeup at home and I was out on location by 6AM. We shot mostly at Iverson's Ranch, and then we shot the rest on a little soundstage in Hollywood for the last week.

**SS:** Had you known how to ride a horse before making your first Westerns?

**JA:** When they asked me if I could ride, I said, "Sure!" We'd always say we could do it no matter what they asked us. I went out to Griffith Park and took riding lessons. Of course, you have to give rental horses a great, big kick to get them to move. I thought, "When I get on location, I'll have time to ride a bit, to get used to the horse." But, that was not to be—my first shot was of me riding 'round the bend. I see all the bad guys riding toward me and turn back toward town to warn everybody. Well, first of all, it was rather humiliating, because the leather pants they fitted me in from Western Costume were so tight I could barely get on the horse!

(Laughs) They had to heave me into the saddle! I was waiting around the bend, and Tommy Carr yelled, "Action!" and I gave my horse a good kick—well, we went off like a shot! We came flying 'round and I think we'd still be going if there hadn't been a mountain in the way! (Laughs) Tommy said, "Well, let's do it again. Next time, you don't have to come quite so fast." So that was my first day on those Westerns.

**SS:** It's funny, of course, but there was also an element of danger. Do you recall any particular mishaps during these shoots?







**LEFT:** Film star James Stewart and director Anthony Mann teamed in the fifties for a series of now-classic Westerns, including *BEND OF THE RIVER* (1952). Julie Adams was Stewart's leading lady. **RIGHT:** Adams was also the love interest in *FRANCIS JOINS THE WACS* (1954)—not of the famous Talking Mule, but of Donald O'Connor, who disliked making an ass of himself in the long-running series. The blonde bombshell on the left is Mamie Van Doren.

**JA:** Later on, at Universal, I could have easily been killed. On the Lippert Westerns, there was a wonderful character actor named Raymond Hatton, who showed me how to work with the horses. He said, "You have to take your pony through and show him what he's supposed to do in each shot." He was great. When I was making *WINGS OF THE HAWK* with Van Heflin, I played a Mexican bandit girl. I learned to ride in a Mexican saddle. They had a wonderful wrangler named Jack Shannon. We rode every day for three weeks at the back lot at Universal. I was learning to do riding dismounts and all sorts of things, and was really riding very well, but Budd Boetticher was directing and he liked the principals to do their own stuff. We had a shot where Van Heflin was driving a wagon and I'm riding alongside, and the bad guys show up in the back. We started to gallop towards the camera and I was supposed to pull my horse up, take my pistol out, fire back twice, and ride out: Well, even though I became a fairly good rider, I wasn't a stunt rider, so it was hard for me to do. My horse wanted to keep going with the wagon, and I pulled up the horse and got the gun out, and it went "Bang!" down on the ground. I thought, "Oh, no! We have to do this all over again!" Nobody had told me that when you ride in the chase, you just keep riding—all these stunt guys behind me used to bet a dollar who would reach the camera first. I wheeled my horse and one of their horses hit mine from behind. I went clear out of the saddle, landing on the ground on my leather holster! Four horses went over me and didn't touch me—I was miraculously saved, I'd say! Later, the stunt coordinator, Davey Sharpe—he smoked this big cigar—he said, "Ya did good, kid! Ya tucked when ya fell." (Laughs)

**SS:** In your early pictures, you were billed under your real name of Betty Adams. Then you became Julia for a dozen or so films, and then finally you were billed as Julie.

**JA:** The first film I did at Universal was *BRIGHT VICTORY*, with Arthur Kennedy and Peggy Dow. Robert Buckner, the producer, had written a picture when he was at Warners, I think, and he had a character called Julia Adams. When they picked up my option for a contract, he suggested that name and the studio thought it was a good idea. So I took Julia, but everybody called me Julie all the time, so later I changed it to Julie.

**SS:** Your first film under your new name was *HOLLYWOOD STORY* in 1951, directed by horror legend William Castle.

**JA:** It was all so new to suddenly be starring in a film that wasn't a Western. It was very interesting, because we had some silent screen stars in the picture. We shot at the Charlie Chaplin studios—the one on La Brea—that hadn't been renovated. There were old flats and props stored in dusty rooms, which added to the atmosphere of the picture. Appropriately for William Castle, it had a very ghostly feeling.

**SS:** Also in 1951, you worked opposite the great William Powell in *TREASURE OF LOST CANYON*.

**JA:** Charles Drake and I were the young couple in the film, so I didn't have a lot of scenes with Mr. Powell. Offscreen, he was charming and just as wonderful as one might think from seeing his films. It was a great treat to meet him. All along the line, I've had many life lessons. Mr. Powell told me a story one day. He said, "Last week I was in New York and as I walked out of the Sherry-Netherlands Hotel, this great crowd rushed towards me—and right past me, to Frank Sinatra." (Laughs) He said, "Well, it was something of a relief." You hear these stories

from people who have had great fame and great success, and the best of them are philosophers like Mr. Powell.

**SS:** Arguably your best Western is Anthony Mann's *BEND OF THE RIVER*, which you made in 1952.

**JA:** He was very much a man's man, humorous and kind. And a skilled director! *BEND OF THE RIVER* was made in only six weeks, and we had wagons crossing a glacier and fording rivers and so on. One day, we were doing a scene where we're escaping from the bad guys and some of the men have been killed. James Stewart says, "Can you drive a four-up?" I look at him and say, "I can try!" In the close shots, there was a man at my feet behind the buckboard really driving. In the long shot, there was a stuntman who doubled me, a small man who doubled women a lot. He had got my scarf on and everything. His name was Clem Fuller. So he started driving the team across the river. It was a shallow river, with rough rocks all the way. Suddenly from under the seat, he pulled out a whip! It was about 40 feet long and he cracked it over the horses! Anthony Mann yelled, "Where did you get that whip? What are you doing?" And the guy said, "Well, I was just trying to make her look good!"

**SS:** You mentioned James Stewart...

**JA:** He was just like one would expect him to be from the screen. It was a great privilege to know him and work with him. Later, I got work on a TV series with him for just one season. He was so utterly professional and just a lovely, warm, genuine person—no pretense and no nonsense. We both remembered one day in particular on *BEND OF THE RIVER*, up on that glacier! We were talking about the movie and he said, "Oh, ya—in the lunch that day, they served us

*Continued on page 70*



# A GAGGLE OF GILL MEN

by Michael Michalski

**H**e arrived amid fantastic hype, revived a sagging studio, and quickly established himself as the newest of the fabled Universal Monsters. A 300-pound, green-gilled remnant from a time long past, a freak of nature unknown to man for centuries—that is, until the release of *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* in 1954.

Filmed in three-dimension, *CREATURE* promised a viewing experience unlike any other before. It did not disappoint. Indeed, the film was all things advertised and more. It was also exploited for all its worth—the studio encouraged theater managers to put tropical fish-filled aquariums and clay replicas of the Gill Man's hand emerging from a rock in movie-house lobbies, and fish netting on the ceiling. Life-size cardboard standups of the Creature were included in publicity packs, with instructions to "spray varnish or shellac over your cut-out and drop some colored sequins on the figure." The Gill Man even met Bud Abbott and Lou Costello—though not in one of the comedy team's popular "Meet the Monsters" series of films, but on television's *COLGATE COMEDY HOUR*.

Produced for just a trifle more than \$600,000, *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* is reported to have grossed \$3 million in its first year of release, spawning two sequels. Audiences were snared in its grasp from the onset, and remain so today, nearly a half-century later. The Gill Man is alive and well and living in DVDs, videos, models, and toys everywhere.

Yet ask the question, "Who played the man inside the Creature from the Black Lagoon?" and the average, non-fanatical movie fan stands silent, unable to come up with the answer. For unlike his famous contemporaries, whose interpreters fans can recite like horror film flash cards (Count Dracula? Lugosi! The Frankenstein Monster? Karloff!), the identity of the Gill Man—the most vibrant and compelling of the Universal monsters from the past 50 years—has never been well-known to any but the most ardent of fans.

The reasons behind the relative anonymity of the Gill Man's identity are many, not the least being that the three films credited no actor for the performance. Universal brain trusts thought it better to leave it to the imagination of the viewer as to whether or not the Gill Man was in fact—real!

Really!

The Creature costume—a product of more than eight months of research and experimentation, including 76 body sketches, 32 head models, and 176 pounds of foam rubber—certainly kept the identity of its human occupant a secret. Or should we say, occupants?

The fact is, it took two men to give life to the Gill Man in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. For landlocked scenes directed by Jack Arnold and shot on the back lot of Universal Studios in Hollywood with the film's stars—Richard Carlson, Julia Adams, and Richard Denning—the affable Ben Chapman donned the costume of the Amazonian anomaly. (According to the of-

ficial contract signed by Chapman for Universal, the title of the role was Gill Man, although throughout the years the character's name has also been spelled Gillman and Gill-Man.)

Below the water line, an entirely different crew and location was employed. Filmed at Wakulla Springs in Florida, it was here that Ricou Browning made his mark as the Gill Man, along with Ginger Stanley admirably performing for Adams, Jack Betts doubling Denning, and Stanley Cruz standing (or rather, swimming) in for Carlson. Directed by James Haven and George Lollier, these sequences were filmed by cameraman Scotty Welbourne.

Ben Chapman, whose Creature countenance was featured on all publicity shots for the film—including the signature arms-over-head still—also was the man behind the hand of the Gill Man as he debuts in the film, slowly scratching its way back into the lagoon along the sand. Other Chapman highlights include the kidnapping of Kay (Adams), the memorable hand-to-hand fighting sequences, and the eerie "Creature in the cage" portion of the story. His finest moment is the final scene, where a wounded "Blackie Lagoon" staggers back into the water. Man in a rubber suit or not, genuine pathos is evident as this living relic is shown simply wanting to go home, his quest for Kay left unfulfilled. In memorabilia recreations, it's most often Chapman's Gill Man who is referenced, as evidenced most recently by the line of Sideshow Toy Universal Monsters.

That said, Ricou Browning was far more than merely a man swimming around in a less-detailed costume.

Indeed, some fans argue that it was Browning who in fact breathed life into the character, pointing to his performance in what many consider the film's highlight—the "underwater ballet" in which the curious modern merman sneaks a closer peak at his would-be female friend. Browning's portrayal also reveals the conflicted nature of the beast, unable to fully comprehend his newfound neighbors, yet unable to keep away from the swimsuit-clad Kay. Some even argue that, without these underwater scenes, which separate the Gill Man from Dracula, Frankenstein, and The Wolf Man by his ability to be monstrous both on land and in the water, the Creature would be just another fifties footnote in horror history.

Browning continued his underwater role through *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955) and *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US* (1956). Tom Hennesy took over for Chapman in *REVENGE*, while the late Don Megowan played Blackie following plastic surgery in the final entry.

*Scarlet Street* is bubbling over with pleasure at having gathered the surviving Gill Men—Ben Chapman, Ricou Browning, and Tom Hennesy—for this Special Swimsuit Issue, along with human costars Julie Adams, Lori Nelson, John Bromfield, and Brett Halsey . . .





# DANGEROUS WHEN WET RICOU BROWNING

interviewed by Michael Michalski

Outside of the late Jacques Cousteau, few men have spent more time around the water than Ricou Browning. Whether diving or directing, doing stunt work or snorkeling, Browning is a man with few peers in the area of filmed aquatics. Best remembered for his work in all three *Creature from the Black Lagoon* films, Browning is too easily categorized as simply "the underwater Creature." In a career spanning more than 50 years, the Florida native has actually performed far more behind the camera rather than before it, in roles running the full gamut of motion pictures.

Born February 16, 1930, Browning was a mere 23-year-old when he answered Hollywood director Jack Arnold's call to play the Gill Man. Browning has always looked ahead, to his next project—not to the past. Happily for *Scarlet Street* readers, he granted this rare, one-on-one interview conducted via phone from his home in South West Ranches, Florida, just outside Fort Lauderdale....

**Scarlet Street:** Your association with Jack Arnold began with a call from a friend, Neut Perry, who wanted you to show Arnold and cameraman Scotty Welbourne some possible locations in Florida for *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. Were you hoping for a chance to break into movies?

**Ricou Browning:** No, not at all. I was in my second year of college and thinking about being a doctor. I had worked with Neut in water shows. I didn't mind, so I showed them Wakulla Springs. They liked the locations.

**SS:** Was it at this point that you were asked to test for the camera?

**RB:** They didn't ask me to test for the camera. They were filming underwater locations. Scotty, the cameraman, said, "Would you mind swimming in front of the camera so I could show some perspective of the size of the leaves and the grass and the fish?" So I did, and I guess it was a couple of weeks later that I got a call from Jack Arnold. He said, "We like the way you swim. How would you like to be the Creature?" I said, "Well, what's the Creature?" He said, "It's a show we're doing about an underwater monster," and I said, "Okay, fine." I went to California and they spent about three months building a suit. The first one wasn't any good. They tested it in a tank in a back lot at Universal Studios.

**SS:** What was wrong with the first suit?

**RB:** It was a matter of Jack and the studio people deciding whether they liked the look of it or not. And they didn't like the look, so they built a second one. I didn't really care. I mean, it was a job.

**SS:** You weren't at all interested in the story or the character itself?

**RB:** I was interested because I could make some money.

**SS:** Your swimming has been described as "Olympic level."

**RB:** Oh, I doubt that very seriously! (Laughs) I swam for the Air Force swimming team back in 1948 and '49. I won a couple of awards, but that was the only competitive swimming I'd ever done. Whoever said that was someone who was hoping I was or something! I was not an Olympic swimmer.

**SS:** Still, in speaking of your swimming prowess, Jack Arnold referred to you as a marvelous swimmer, claiming that you could stay underwater for almost five minutes without taking a breath.

**RB:** I don't think it was quite that long, really—maybe around three minutes.

**SS:** How were you able to hold your breath for such a long period?

**RB:** Who knows? (Laughs) Once, when I was a lifeguard at Wakulla Springs—the same place where we shot *CREATURE*—a buddy and I decided to swim across the Springs, which was quite a way. We hyperventilated—deep breathing—prior to diving and started swimming to the other side. On the way over, he gave up, but I kept going. I remember seeing some lily pads—and that's all I remember. I passed out. He saved me. His name was Sonny Lee. He pulled me up and I was okay. I was about 16 or 17.

**SS:** How difficult was it to perform underwater in the Creature costume?

**RB:** It was like trying to swim in an overcoat! It wasn't that it was heavy in the water—I had to wear lead weights because the suit was buoyant. I had some over my chest and on my ankles, but still

when you swam there was a lot of material on you.

**SS:** How long did it take to get used to the Creature costume?

**RB:** Well, it didn't matter whether I got used to it or not—I just did it!

**SS:** Fans praise the Gill Man swimming style, best described as a long, swooping stroke. Was this something you created for the role?

**RB:** That was mine to begin with; that's the way I swam normally. That's what Jack liked and why he called me to be the Creature.

**SS:** Describe the breathing process in the suit.

**RB:** There was no breathing. We didn't have room enough to put a tank in it. I had worked in underwater shows hose-breathing—in other words, breathing from an air hose. We used that method. We'd have safety men offstage, out of the picture, holding the hoses on both sides of whatever scene was taking place. When the scene was finished—or when I finished—I was able to stick it into my mouth and breathe. It was that simple. There were no drastic close calls. I had a signal to all the safety people, where if I totally relaxed that meant, "I need air!" In the scenes, I was usually fighting and there was no way to say anything or wave or whatever—so I totally relaxed and one of them would bring me an air hose.

**SS:** No close calls, but did any amusing incidents occur?

**RB:** Well, one in particular—we were filming at Wakulla Springs. It was winter and it gets pretty cold up in the northern part of Florida. The water's about 72 degrees, maybe a little colder, and you're in it all day. You get pretty

chilly, so every now and then someone would give me a shot of brandy. I wasn't a drinker at that time at all, and pretty soon they were dealing with a drunken underwater Creature! (Laughs) Another one—we had wrapped for the day, and usually they took the suit off out on the barge. Now, on this day, I was in a hurry—I don't know why—and I said, "I'm going to swim in." So they took the head off and I swam wearing the rest of the outfit, over to the dock area. As I was swimming up to the dock, I could see a lady and a little girl standing above the ladder—and, of course, all they could see of me was my head. When I started climbing out of the water, they saw the full costume. Well, the little girl started yelling and running and screaming and crying. I climbed out really fast and started yelling, "Hey! Wait a minute!" But it didn't do any good—the more I did, the more frightened they both became! (Laughs)

**SS:** The Creature frightened his first victims. Anything else?

**RB:** On the second Creature picture, we drove from St. Augustine, Florida, to Marine Land Studios and someone said, "Let's go out on the beach. We'll cover you up, you go out in the water, and then swim in and walk right out on the beach." This was where all the people swim out of St. Augustine. We were going to do it, but then I thought somebody might get the bright idea to take a .22 rifle or something and shoot me—and succeed! (Laughs) So we didn't do it.

**SS:** The most memorable sequence in the first film was what is referred to as the "underwater ballet" between yourself and Ginger Stanley, who doubled for Julie Adams.

**RB:** Basically, it was just scripted as, "The Creature follows her." My vision was very bad in the Creature suit. In order for me to swim with her, I had to get very close. I'd swim up under her, and I had a very hard time doing this without touching her. It was a very difficult way to swim, so there wasn't too much romantic about it to me—I was holding my breath, I was upside-down, and I was trying to stay far enough away from her that I wouldn't hit her, all at the same time. It just turned out that it worked very well. That's my favorite scene in the movie.

**SS:** You mentioned vision problems.

**RB:** That was very complicated. When we started out, we wanted to put a face mask on under the head, but the face mask protruded too far out and it wouldn't make the head look normal. So we tried goggles, like swimmers use in racing, but when they filled up with water there was no way to get the water out. So I decided not to use anything. I went with my bare eyes, but the eyes of the Creature were about an inch away from my own eyes. It was like looking through a keyhole. The vision was the most difficult thing.

**SS:** Did you ever swim past the mark because of the vision problems?

**RB:** I don't know—we shot until we got it! (Laughs)

**SS:** What did you think when you saw *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* for the first time?

**RB:** Nothing really stands out. I enjoyed watching it. Shortly after that, I was producing an underwater show at Weeki Wachee Springs and I never thought much about doing other things. Then I got a call and worked on *TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*. I was one of the divers in the suits.

**SS:** Did you think you'd ever be discussing *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* almost 50 years after the fact?

**RB:** When you go see a movie, you watch it, it's over, you go home—and a week later that movie is out of your mind. That's about how it was. It was about 10 years ago or less that I started getting letters from people about the Creature. Prior to that, I never heard another word about it. I don't think it became a cult film until then.

**SS:** Fans may not realize that you have an unmasked cameo role in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.

**RB:** I was a lab technician. It was shot at Marine Land Studios in St. Augustine. We were supposed to be drawing blood or putting blood in, something like that. I didn't ask for it. Jack said, "Hey, we've got something we want you to do." I said, "Sure. Whatever." As long as you got the money, honey, I got the time! (Laughs)

**SS:** When you were called back for *REVENGE*, were you wary of doing a sequel?

**RB:** They didn't even call me about the second movie! When they started filming, no one could cut it, so they called and asked me to come. But they didn't build the suits to fit me the second time. I had to wear the suits of the taller guy originally cast to do the underwater scenes in the second film. They had to cut the suit down to fit me. On the third one, they called me right way so they wouldn't have a problem.

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# DANGEROUS WHEN WET RICOU BROWNING

interviewed by Michael Michalski

**O**utside of the late Jacques Cousteau, few men have spent more time around the water than Ricou Browning. Whether diving or directing, doing stunt work or snorkeling, Browning is a man with few peers in the area of filmed aquatics. Best remembered for his work in all three *Creature from the Black Lagoon* films, Browning is too easily categorized as simply "the underwater Creature." In a career spanning more than 50 years, the Florida native has actually performed far more behind the camera rather than before it, in roles running the full gamut of motion pictures.

Born February 16, 1930, Browning was a mere 23-year-old when he answered Hollywood director Jack Arnold's call to play the Gill Man. Browning has always looked ahead, to his next project—not to the past. Happily for *Scarlet Street* readers, he granted this rare, one-on-one interview conducted via phone from his home in South West Ranches, Florida, just outside Fort Lauderdale . . . .

*Scarlet Street:* Your association with Jack Arnold began with a call from a friend, Newt Perry, who wanted you to show Arnold and cameraman Scotty Welbourne some possible locations in Florida for *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. Were you hoping for a chance to break into movies?

**Ricou Browning:** No, not at all. I was in my second year of college and thinking about being a doctor. I had worked with Newt in water shows. I didn't mind, so I showed them Wakulla Springs. They liked the locations.

**SS:** Was it at this point that you were asked to test for the camera?

**RB:** They didn't ask me to test for the camera. They were filming underwater locations. Scotty, the cameraman, said, "Would you mind swimming in front of the camera so I could show some perspective of the size of the leaves and the grass and the fish?" So I did, and I guess it was a couple of weeks later that I got a call from Jack Arnold. He said, "We like the way you swim. How would you like to be the Creature?" I said, "Well, what's the Creature?" He said, "It's a show we're doing about an underwater monster," and I said, "Okay, fine." I went to California and they spent about three months building a suit. The first one wasn't any good. They tested it in a tank in a back lot at Universal Studios.

**SS:** What was wrong with the first suit?

**RB:** It was a matter of Jack and the studio people deciding whether they liked the look of it or not. And they didn't like the look, so they built a second one. I didn't really care. I mean, it was a job.

**SS:** You weren't at all interested in the story or the character itself?

**RB:** I was interested because I could make some money.

**SS:** Your swimming has been described as "Olympic level."

**RB:** Oh, I doubt that very seriously! (Laughs) I swam for the Air Force swimming team back in 1948 and '49. I won a couple of awards, but that was the only competitive swimming I'd ever done. Whoever said that was someone who was hoping I was or something! I was not an Olympic swimmer.

**SS:** Still, in speaking of your swimming prowess, Jack Arnold referred to you a marvelous swimmer, claiming that you could stay underwater for almost five minutes without taking a breath.

**RB:** I don't think it was quite that long, really—maybe around three minutes.

**SS:** How were you able to hold your breath for such a long period?

**RB:** Who knows? (Laughs) Once, when I was a lifeguard at Wakulla Springs—the same place where we shot *CREATURE*—a buddy and I decided to swim across the Springs, which was quite a way. We hyperventilated—deep breathing—prior to diving and started swimming to the other side. On the way over, he gave up, but I kept going. I remember seeing some lily pads—and that's all I remember. I passed out. He saved me. His name was Sonny Lee. He pulled me up and I was okay. I was about 16 or 17.

**SS:** How difficult was it to perform underwater in the Creature costume?

**RB:** It was like trying to swim in an overcoat! It wasn't that it was heavy in the water—I had to wear lead weights because the suit was buoyant. I had some over my chest and on my ankles, but still

when you swam there was a lot of material on you.

**SS:** How long did it take to get used to the Creature costume?

**RB:** Well, it didn't matter whether I got used to it or not—I just did it!

**SS:** Fans praise the Gill Man swimming style, best described as a long, swooping stroke. Was this something you created for the role?

**RB:** That was mine to begin with; that's the way I swam normally. That's what Jack liked and why he called me to be the Creature.

**SS:** Describe the breathing process in the suit.

**RB:** There was no breathing. We didn't have room enough to put a tank in it. I had worked in underwater shows hose-breathing—in other words, breathing from an air hose. We used that method. We'd have safety men offstage, out of the picture, holding the hoses on both sides of whatever scene was taking place. When the scene was finished—or when I finished—I was able to stick it into my mouth and breath. It was that simple. There were no drastic close calls. I had a signal to all the safety people, where if I totally relaxed that meant, "I need air!" In the scenes, I was usually fighting and there was no way to say anything or wave or whatever—so I totally relaxed and one of them would bring me an air hose.

**SS:** No close calls, but did any amusing incidents occur?

**RB:** Well, one in particular—we were filming at Wakulla Springs. It was winter and it gets pretty cold up in the northern part of Florida. The water's about 72 degrees, maybe a little colder, and you're in it all day. You get pretty



chilly, so every now and then someone would give me a shot of brandy. I wasn't a drinker at that time at all, and pretty soon they were dealing with a drunken underwater Creature! (Laughs) Another one—we had wrapped for the day, and usually they took the suit off out on the barge. Now, on this day, I was in a hurry—I don't know why—and I said, "I'm going to swim in." So they took the head off and I swam wearing the rest of the outfit, over to the dock area. As I was swimming up to the dock, I could see a lady and a little girl standing above the ladder—and, of course, all they could see of me was my head. When I started climbing out of the water, they saw the full costume. Well, the little girl started yelling and running and screaming and crying. I climbed out really fast and started yelling, "Hey! Wait a minute!" But it didn't do any good—the more I did, the more frightened they both became! (Laughs)

**SS:** *The Creature frightened his first victims. Anything else?*

**RB:** On the second Creature picture, we drove from St. Augustine, Florida, to Marine Land Studios and someone said, "Let's go out on the beach. We'll cover you up, you go out in the water, and then swim in and walk right out on the beach." This was where all the people swim out of St. Augustine. We were going to do it, but then I thought somebody might get the bright idea to take a .22 rifle or something and shoot me—and succeed! (Laughs) So we didn't do it.

**SS:** *The most memorable sequence in the first film was what is referred to as the "underwater ballet" between yourself and Ginger Stanley, who doubled for Julie Adams.*

**RB:** Basically, it was just scripted as, "The Creature follows her." My vision was very bad in the Creature suit. In order for me to swim with her, I had to get very close. I'd swim up under her, and I had a very hard time doing this without touching her. It was a very difficult way to swim, so there wasn't too much romantic about it to me—I was holding my breath, I was upside-down, and I was trying to stay far enough away from her that I wouldn't hit her, all at the same time. It just turned out that it worked very well. That's my favorite scene in the movie.

**SS:** *You mentioned vision problems.*

**RB:** That was very complicated. When we started out, we wanted to put a face mask on under the head, but the face mask protruded too far out and it wouldn't make the head look normal. So we tried goggles, like swimmers use in racing, but when they filled up with water there was no way to get the water out. So I decided not to use anything. I went with my bare eyes, but the eyes of the Creature were about an inch away from my own eyes. It was like looking through a keyhole. The vision was the most difficult thing.

**SS:** *Did you ever swim past the mark because of the vision problems?*

**RB:** I don't know—we shot until we got it! (Laughs)

**SS:** *What did you think when you saw CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON for the first time?*

**RB:** Nothing really stands out. I enjoyed watching it. Shortly after that, I was producing an underwater show at Weeki Wachee Springs and I never thought much about doing other things. Then I got a call and worked on TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. I was one of the divers in the suits.

**SS:** *Did you think you'd ever be discussing CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON almost 50 years after the fact?*

**RB:** When you go see a movie, you watch it, it's over, you go home—and a week later that movie is out of your mind. That's about how it was. It was about 10 years ago or less that I started getting letters from people about the Creature. Prior to that, I never heard another word about it. I don't think it became a cult film until then.

**SS:** *Fans may not realize that you have an unmasked cameo role in REVENGE OF THE CREATURE.*

**RB:** I was a lab technician. It was shot at Marine Land Studios in St. Augustine. We were supposed to be drawing blood or putting blood in, something like that. I didn't ask for it. Jack said, "Hey, we've got something we want you to do." I said, "Sure. Whatever." As long as you got the money, honey, I got the time! (Laughs)

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# DANGEROUS WHEN DRY

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Having spent time in the United States Army for a period of two years during the Korean War, Chapman was a fresh-faced, 24-year-old newly-signed contractee when he landed the plum role of the Creature. Little did he realize that he would forever become the man behind the last iconic image in the studio's monster-making-machine....

**Scarlet Street:** Your ascent into the movie business at Universal followed on the heels of performing Polynesian song-and-dance and some bit roles.

**Ben Chapman:** Being from Tahiti, I got into Polynesian singing and dancing, and finally I did a movie in 1949 called PANGLOSS LOVE SONG, with Esther Williams and Howard Keel—that was my first touch of movies. I got called up in 1950 to go to the Korean War. I got out in 1952 and went back to singing and dancing. I love audiences! One night, some people from Universal Studios came in and were going to make a musical short about the Miss Universe show. I played a young chieftain and they offered me a contract. That's how I got the role of the Gill Man.

**SS:** When casting director Jonny Rennick first approached you, what did you think about playing the Creature?

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**SS:** What did your friends and family think when you told them you would be playing this fantastic character?

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call. If I hadn't come to the studio that day and walked into Jonny Rennick's office, if she hadn't asked me, if the studio hadn't approached me—who knows? She said, "You'd be perfect! You're half fish!" The next day I was signed. I mean, it was very fast.

**SS:** A classic case of being in the right place at the right time?

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**SS:** At first, the Creature is simply curious.

**BC:** Exactly! He didn't know what a human being was, but when they started shooting—that's when he got mad. When Julie Adams—Kay Lawrence was her character—when she got into the water and he looked at her from underneath, he fell in love. That's the whole theory of beauty and the beast. He wants her. Well, she gets back on the boat and it starts to leave, and as far as he's concerned, it's, "Throw her over the side and you guys can leave!" (Laughs)

**SS:** It wasn't only the Gill Man who fell in love with Julie Adams.

**BC:** Oh, she was gorgeous! I hate her today, because she still looks the same! She's gorgeous! She's just a very nice person. Going to work on that picture, getting up in the morning—I couldn't wait to get to work. It was like a big family. Nobody yelled, there were no problems. I spent my 25th birthday on the set. When I started, I was 24, and when we finished it I was 25—an old 25! (Laughs)

**SS:** You've kept up your friendship with Julie Adams, haven't you?

**BC:** I'll tell you a funny story—we were talking one day, and I said, "Julie, can you believe the success of CREATURE after all these years?" She said, "Benny, let me tell you a story. I went to France to do one of those film fests. They introduced me, and when I got up at the podium, they started chanting CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON! They'd forgotten everything else I'd ever done!" (Laughs)

**SS:** What are your recollections of the rest of the movie's cast, such as Nestor Paiva?

**BC:** Nestor Paiva? What a great man! He was without a doubt one of the greatest character actors of all time. He

could play anything—a dapper guy, gangsters, cowboys. These were great, great actors, no doubt about it. Antonio Moreno, who played the professor who discovered the fossilized hand, was a big star in the silent era. Richard Denning—what can I say about Dick? I knew Dick very well, because he moved to Hawaii. He lived on the island of Maui. He also played the governor on HAWAII 5-0. Richard Carlson—a very intelligent man. He was a phi-beta-kappa at the University of Minnesota.

**SS:** How long did it take to shoot the picture?

**BC:** I'd say seven or eight weeks. People think, "Gee, that's awfully short." They don't realize that we were shooting at the back lot at Universal and, at the same time, in Florida, they had Ricou Browning, Ginger Stanley doubling for Julie, Jack Betts doubling for Richard Denning, and Stanley Cruz doubling for Richard Carlson. It saved half the time.

**SS:** Was it shot simultaneously in California and Florida for budgetary reasons?

**BC:** Well, primarily. First of all, there's no clear water in California, not that clear. They'd have had to hire other doubles, anyway, and since these people were from Florida and they were doing a water show, they were a natural.

**SS:** Would you have preferred to perform the swimming scenes yourself?

**BC:** Oh, sure! Most actors like to do their own stunts. They like to do everything. I'd have liked to have done the fire scene,

too. I went through the motions like I was on fire, and then they got the stuntman, Al Wyatt, to go through the same

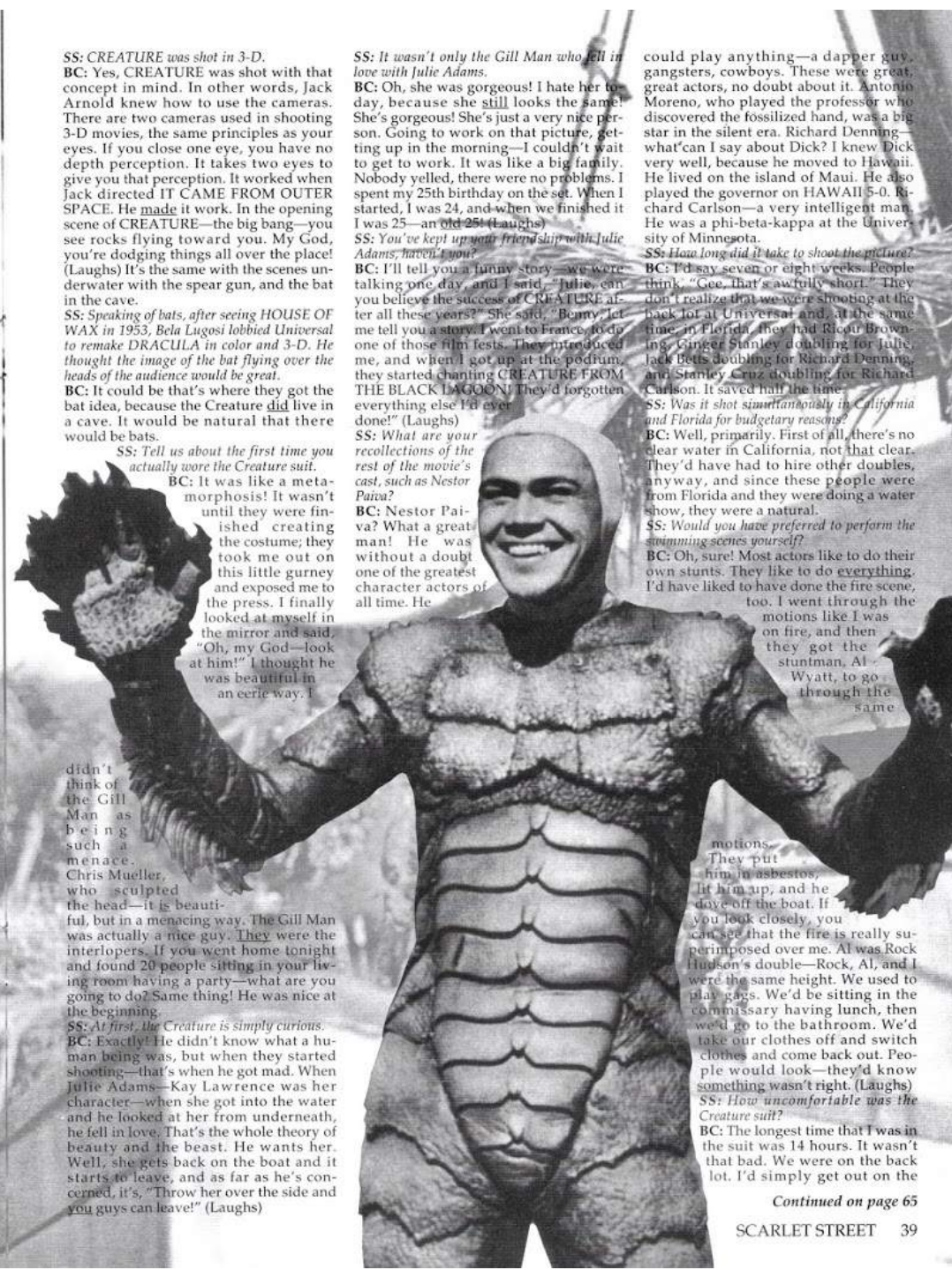
motions.

They put him in asbestos, lit him up, and he dove off the boat. If you look closely, you can see that the fire is really superimposed over me. Al was Rock Hudson's double—Rock, Al, and I were the same height. We used to play gags. We'd be sitting in the commissary having lunch, then we'd go to the bathroom. We'd take our clothes off and switch clothes and come back out. People would look—they'd know something wasn't right. (Laughs)

**SS:** How uncomfortable was the Creature suit?

**BC:** The longest time that I was in the suit was 14 hours. It wasn't that bad. We were on the back lot. I'd simply get out on the

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Chris Mueller, who sculpted the head—it is beautiful, but in a menacing way. The Gill Man was actually a nice guy. They were the interlopers. If you went home tonight and found 20 people sitting in your living room having a party—what are you going to do? Same thing! He was nice at the beginning.

SS: At first, the Creature is simply curious.

BC: Exactly! He didn't know what a human being was, but when they started shooting—that's when he got mad. When Julie Adams—Kay Lawrence was her character—when she got into the water and he looked at her from underneath, he fell in love. That's the whole theory of beauty and the beast. He wants her. Well, she gets back on the boat and it starts to leave, and as far as he's concerned, it's, "Throw her over the side and you guys can leave!" (Laughs)

SS: It wasn't only the Gill Man who fell in love with Julie Adams.

BC: Oh, she was gorgeous! I hate her today, because she still looks the same! She's gorgeous! She's just a very nice person. Going to work on that picture, getting up in the morning—I couldn't wait to get to work. It was like a big family. Nobody yelled, there were no problems. I spent my 25th birthday on the set. When I started, I was 24, and when we finished it I was 25—an old 25! (Laughs)

SS: You've kept up your friendship with Julie Adams, haven't you?

BC: I'll tell you a funny story—we were talking one day, and I said, "Julie, can you believe the success of CREATURE after all these years?" She said, "Benny, let me tell you a story. I went to France, to do one of those film fests. They introduced me, and when I got up at the podium, they started chanting CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON! They'd forgotten everything else I'd ever done!" (Laughs)

SS: What are your recollections of the rest of the movie's cast, such as Nestor Paiva?

BC: Nestor Paiva? What a great man! He was without a doubt one of the greatest character actors of all time. He

could play anything—a dapper guy, gangsters, cowboys. These were great, great actors, no doubt about it. Antonio Moreno, who played the professor who discovered the fossilized hand, was a big star in the silent era. Richard Denning—what can I say about Dick? I knew Dick very well, because he moved to Hawaii. He lived on the island of Maui. He also played the governor on HAWAII 5-0. Richard Carlson—a very intelligent man. He was a phi-beta-kappa at the University of Minnesota.

SS: How long did it take to shoot the picture?

BC: I'd say seven or eight weeks. People think, "Gee, that's awfully short." They don't realize that we were shooting at the back lot at Universal and, at the same time, in Florida, they had Ricou Browning, Ginger Stanley doubling for Julie, Jack Betts doubling for Richard Denning, and Stanley Cruz doubling for Richard Carlson. It saved half the time.

SS: Was it shot simultaneously in California and Florida for budgetary reasons?

BC: Well, primarily. First of all, there's no clear water in California, not that clear. They'd have had to hire other doubles, anyway, and since these people were from Florida and they were doing a water show, they were a natural.

SS: Would you have preferred to perform the swimming scenes yourself?

BC: Oh, sure! Most actors like to do their own stunts. They like to do everything. I'd have liked to have done the fire scene, too. I went through the motions like I was on fire, and then they got the stuntman, Al Wyatt, to go through the same

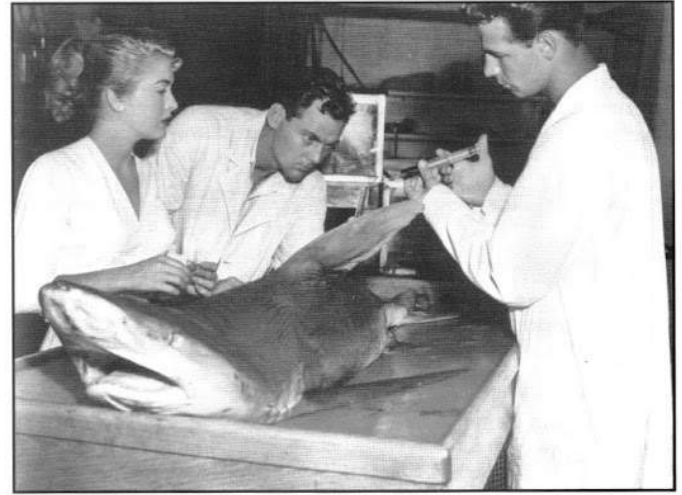
motions. They put him in asbestos, lit him up, and he dove off the boat. If you look closely, you can see that the fire is really superimposed over me. Al was Rock Hudson's double—Rock, Al, and I were the same height. We used to play gags. We'd be sitting in the commissary having lunch, then we'd go to the bathroom. We'd take our clothes off and switch clothes and come back out. People would look—they'd know something wasn't right. (Laughs)

SS: How uncomfortable was the Creature suit?

BC: The longest time that I was in the suit was 14 hours. It wasn't that bad. We were on the back lot. I'd simply get out on the

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LEFT: Dr. Thompson (Whit Bissell) is nearly clawed to death by an enraged Gill Man. In the fifties, Bissell alternated between playing the hapless victim (here and in 1951's *LOST CONTINENT*) and crazed villain (1957's *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF* and the same year's *I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN*). RIGHT: A new group of pesky scientists (played by Lori Nelson, John Agar, and, in a bit part sans Creature drag, Ricou Browning) was introduced in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955).

### THE CREATURE TRILOGY

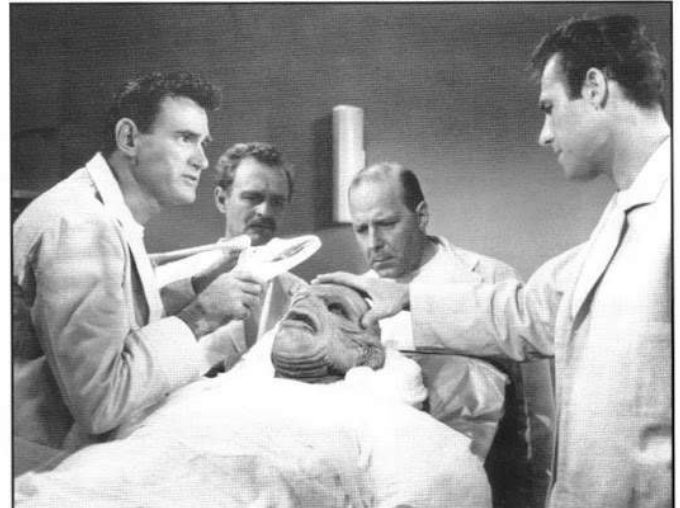
*Continued from 31*

Kay is the focal point of the film, as she is the Gill Man's desire. A timeless beauty, she is beyond the struggle between science and nature that provides the story's action. Essentially aligned with science, her body is all nature. In an important scene that ably characterizes her, we see Kay standing on deck, gazing out at the surrounding foliage, listening in hypnotized unease to the unearthly yowls of the wildlife concealed therein, tuning in to the frequency of ultra-primitive nature. David approaches and, when she mentions that the howling unnerves her, he promptly dispels the mystery. "Those are guyra monkeys," he says. Nothing can scare David, as long as it can be named. For Kay, though, there's the awareness that they're drifting back in time to "the cradle of life," where she may wind up sacrificed on the altar, reclaimed by the primordial oceans. She senses it, much like Ann Darrow (Fay Wray), in her on-deck screen test, senses *KING KONG* (1933) before she even gets to Skull Island. The lagoon is, symbolically, Kay's womb, and she is comforted enough by its smooth surface to go for that famous swim, with the Creature swimming in symbolic sexual congress beneath her.

When the swim threatens to get literally physical, with the Gill Man working up the nerve to brush his webbed fingers along the bottom of Kay's foot, Lucas shouts from the deck of the *Rita*—"You're too far out, Miss Lawrence!" "Far out" would become a hippy expression in the following decade, and it can be seen that way here. Kay has begun drifting into a mating ritual beneath her conscious notice. She is getting "far out" like some sixties love child, running away from home to the "other world" of San Francisco, with flowers in her hair. However, this is still 1954, and so Kay climbs back aboard the *Rita* and the Creature find himself snared (though unseen) in her fishing nets. Nature and civilization have met, and the Creature is drawn to the beauty of it, but gets too close to the light; he finds himself trapped. Of course, man can only trap nature for a moment or two, and then it breaks free again.

Mark and David investigate beneath the lagoon surface and encounter the Creature. Mark shoots at the Gill Man, wounding him in the side (a symbolic wound from the Arous and Psyche myth, the awakening of romantic longing and awareness). "Why'd you shoot it?" David asks after they climb safely out of the water. "You act as if I put the harpoon through you, David!" Mark retorts. Mark has no

LEFT: The captured Creature (Ricou Browning) enjoys a fine picnic lunch, untroubled by ants or inclement weather. Of course, the sandwiches are a trifle soggy and the pickles floated away. RIGHT: New film, new pesky scientists—Doctors William Barton (Jeff Morrow), Dr. Johnson (James Rawley), Dr. Borg (Maurice Manson), and Tom Morgan (Rex Reason) operate and, lo and behold, *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US* (1956).





concept of empathy, and ridicules the very notion, yet we as an audience empathize with the Creature already, and perhaps do feel the harpoon has been shot through us. Even so, it's hard to hate Mark; he's legitimately mystified by David's feelings for the Creature. After all, the animal did murder two defenseless natives, proving wrong David's theory that it "only attacks when threatened"—but to the audience, it doesn't matter; we've already forgotten Tomas and Luis. Our identification is not only with the humans, but also with the Creature, especially now that he has suffered his wound.

No one on the Rita believes Mark and David's reports of the Gill Man. Eyewitness testimony can be considered fact in a court of law, but means nothing to science, which cripples itself through its dismissal of everything subjective. (True objectivity about nature in itself is impossible from inside an organic brain—sort of like trying to perform eye surgery on oneself without a mirror.) Underwater photographs taken by David are hurriedly developed below deck, but they end up revealing no beast. Lucas then relates that he has heard the story of a man-fish, from an eccentric local named Crazy Bully. Thompson scoffs at the notion. The story Lucas heard is obviously valid, yet seems like fiction. We the audience have just seen the Creature, but even we don't entirely believe Crazy Bully's story! Meanwhile, the Gill Man is right outside, shambling along the deck and dragging one of the crew, Chico (Henry Escalante), into the lagoon. Another crew member, Zee (Bernie Gozier), claims Chico was dragged into the lagoon by a demon. "Demon? That's no more farfetched than a Gill Man," Thompson muses. Lucas retorts, "Even I, Lucas, have heard the legend of the man fish!" (Either this is a script glitch, or sheer tension has caused some minor amnesia on the captain's part.) Two colleagues swear to have seen a Gill Man, a deck hand swears a demon made off with his brother, and Lucas mentions he has heard the legend of a man-fish, twice, but still Thompson can't make the connection.

Later, Kay smokes on deck, thinking deeply about the presence she felt in the water, the brush of something on her foot. Then she drops her cigarette in the lagoon. The action aligns her with the men on the boat, and not with the environment around her, or the Creature. Though she obviously feels a deep connection to the jungle and the monster, she symbolically drops the cigarette into his face, as a rejection, literally polluting their relationship. The camera follows the path of the cigarette below the surface to where the Gill Man lurks, staring above at her, mouth agape. The famous Keep American Beautiful TV commercial featuring a crying Indian was more than a decade away, but other environmental ads were around at the time, and fresh in the public mind. Perhaps the Creature is crying, too, his tears lost in the waters of the Black Lagoon. How tragic that, shortly after their arrival at this lush Edenic spot, never before visited by man, our heroes are shooting at the wildlife, poisoning the fish, and littering!

Though we never consciously lose sympathy with the expedition's members, we never grow very attached to them, either; even our beloved Kay remains a bit of a mystery, a trifle cold and self-absorbed, with poor taste in men. Meanwhile, we've been growing more attached to the Creature, feeling his pain, feeling as though Mark had put the harpoon through us, knowing Kay will never willingly mate with him. We become the Creature in a sense, watching the human characters from a distance, feeling isolated. Consider how many shots in the film look onto the boat rather than vice versa. Jack Arnold had already used this approach in his previous film, *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE*, giving viewers the eerie feeling that the desert itself was watching the protagonists, and doing so through our eyes. Similarly, the Creature, the audience, and the Amazon jungle are combined in one perspective, which observes the action on the Rita from outside, unwanted and unseen by the main characters.

Jack Arnold claimed that "people who see Freudian metaphors here may be giving me too much credit," but to take credit for Freudian metaphors in your work may be missing the point, sort of like Rorschach taking credit for images in ink blots. In generating audience sympathy for his monster ("I wanted to make the Creature—my little beastie" as I called him—a sympathetic character because I liked him."), Arnold opens up a floodgate and lets in the whole precognitive ocean of infantile wish fulfillment. We are the Freudian "original monster," watching moodily from the wings as "mom" is spirited away by some bossy guy who speaks her language. Mute and invisible, we're trapped outside the film, wanting in—a prospective certainly heightened by 3-D during the film's original run.

Putting viewer empathy in line with the Creature is, of course, only a temporary thing. Eventually, as in all good horror films, the identification with the "other" must be rejected. We continue to pity the Creature, but he is going down, and the film is going to end, and we are going to have to face reality. Nevertheless, it's still difficult to root for David as the hero, though he is certainly agile and team-spirited. Springing manfully around the Rita with his shirt off, ordering everyone about, he's a threat to himself and to others.

A plan is made to capture the Creature using rotenone, a natural fishicide spooned into the water. This kills most of the fish in the lagoon, and makes the Gill Man groggy. Mark and David follow him to a hidden underwater grotto and through the grotto to the beach, where they capture him and bring him aboard the Rita. Mark wants to get the hell out of the lagoon right away, but David insists that they stay. "Mark, we're not going anywhere until we've made a thorough study of that grotto!" Again, David orders his own boss around, and his willful decision to remain will result in another death.

In the next, very tragic scene, Kay, seriously unnerved, looks down upon the Creature in its holding tank. (David and Mark are presumably off in the grotto.) Thompson approaches. "What do you suppose is taking them so long?" Kay asks. "David's very thorough," Thompson replies, and the two share a knowing glance. The look slyly and silently indicates that they both see David's "thoroughness" as stubborn, egocentric insecurity. For Kay, it speaks of waiting for a kiss that never comes as David waxes at length on the phases of the moon and the insect-attracting properties of the jasmine-scented night. The Creature, nature personified, seizes the moment to erupt from his pen, mutilating Thompson and escaping.

When Mark and David return, the latter immediately decides that they must leave. (When they had the Creature he wanted to stay, now he wants to leave!) You'd think David might feel a certain level of responsibility, having left an older man and a woman to guard a dangerous, unpredictable monster while he and Mark skipped off to collect rocks. He doesn't. Even though he changes his mind in midstream, David never doubts that his ideas are scientifically correct. When Mark appeals to him to reconsider (now that there's a Creature to catch again, Mark has also reversed his position), David's response is an indignant, "We're trapped and fighting for our lives!"—as if this isn't entirely his own fault! Having no gauge for the Creature's superhuman strength, David felt certain that the beast was subdued, and when his scientific estimate was proven wrong, it was, he reasons, somehow because of Mark's greediness.

Unfortunately for David's new decree, the Creature has blocked the lagoon entrance with a huge tree. It becomes a battle for survival as David tries to fasten a winch around the tree trunk so they can lift it out of the way, without the Creature killing him or getting on deck to grab Kay. Mark tries to help and is killed, and the Creature kidnaps Kay and makes for the grotto. David rushes to her rescue, and finds her spread out on a crude primitive altar,





LEFT: The Gill Man (Ben Chapman) menaces lovely Kay Lawrence (Julie Adams, wearing a one-piece white swimsuit similar to the "scandalous" one worn by Elizabeth Taylor in 1959's *SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER*). RIGHT: The Creature (Ricou Browning) is chauffeured to a hard day's work on the Lagoon.

waiting as the Creature reoxygenates its gills. The Creature attacks David and is stabbed. Lucas and the other survivors enter the grotto and shoot at the Creature, which staggers back into the water to his—presumed—death.

Science continually refuses to admit its mistakes even as it reverses its own decisions. (Consider the frequent reports that foods that used to cause cancer now prevent it.) This "blameless" scientist is one of the primary mythological archetypes of the Atomic Age. Too educated to believe in good or evil, he can only blithely toss out a scientific rationale when his investigations end up wreaking havoc by disrupting the slumbering, prehistoric forces of the world. Like Dr. Carrington (Robert Cornthwaite) in *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* (1951), David seems to feel it's better to die than harm the monster, lest some important discovery be missed. When David finally fights back after being cornered in the grotto, he still orders Lucas and Carl to stop shooting as the Gill Man staggers back to the lagoon. Of course, unlike the alien carrot in *THE THING*, here we root for the Creature. He was here first; David and the other humans are the alien invaders. That David understands this and accords the Creature some respect is one of his more heroic aspects, despite the body count wrought as a result.

The last shot of the film is the Creature sinking into the Black Lagoon. Except for Lucas in the immediate sequel, we never see Kay or David or any of the other expedition members again. They all vanish like a dream of the Creature, mere facets of his persona as he "awakens" into death. It is not the scientists seeking to understand or destroy nature that is the real subject here; it is Nature, embodied in the Green Man, seeking to understand itself via scientists. We are not the dreamers, but the dreamed. Scientist and their goddess girlfriends come and go, but the Creature is eternal, waiting in a timeless sleep for the next chapter in his story.

*CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* was a huge success, with eager crowds lining up to see it. Even Marilyn Monroe saw the film (in 1955's *THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH*) and stood on a New York City subway grate afterwards, her dress flying up around her waist as she told Tom Ewell how sorry she felt for the Creature. ("He was kinda scary looking, but he wasn't all bad. I think he just craved a little attention—you know, the sense of being loved and needed and wanted.") Shot on a budget of

\$650,000, *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* made millions and etched a permanent spot for itself in the collective consciousness. A sequel was naturally rushed into production and released the following year.

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"Of the three Creature films, I thought *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* was superior. We shot that in Marineland. The story had him captured and put into a tank. I asked if they'd do us a favor and put in a net and divide the dangerous fish and put them on one side, and leave the fish that looked bad but were harmless on the other. They said they would. Well, when I got there the day we were ready to shoot, I went up to look at the tank and there was no net. I said, 'Fellas, I gotta get actors in there.' They said not to worry, that they feed the fish every hour on the hour and that the divers go down all the time. I said that it was a diver's job, but these were actors—to get them to walk up a three-foot hill was a 'stunt.'"

—Jack Arnold, interviewed by Mark McGee and Susan Frank

*REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* was directed by Jack Arnold, this time from a script by Martin Berkeley, who later wrote *TARANTULA* (1955) and *THE DEADLY MANTIS* (1957). It wasn't as big a hit as its predecessor, which may have had something to do with the 3-D craze being already on the wane. It's also considerably less focused. *REVENGE* almost seems like three different movies (Creature at Home/Creature in Captivity/Creature at Large) as it struggles to find its tone. As with the original, though, it serves as an eloquent message film for Arnold's subtle critique of science vs. nature.

The story begins back at the Black Lagoon, aboard the Rita. Jackson Foster (Grandon Rhodes), an agent for Ocean Park in Florida, has chartered Lucas' vessel to return to the "scene of the crime" and pick up the Gill Man, who may be dead after the damage done by the first expedition. From a scientific standpoint, it's shocking—though hardly surprising—that David decided to leave the body of the Creature in the Black Lagoon following the

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# MY SCIENCE PROJECT LORI NELSON

interviewed by  
**Kevin G. Shinnick**

**S**he was Ma and Pa Kettle's eldest daughter, in *MA AND PA KETTLE AT THE FAIR* (1952) and *MA AND PA KETTLE AT WAIKIKI* (1955). She was pals with Donald O'Connor and Francis the Talking Mule, in *FRANCIS GOES TO WEST POINT* (1952). And she was the Gill Man's second girlfriend, in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955). She starred in the television sitcom version of *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE* (1957), then married and retired from acting, divorced, and married again.

Born Dixie Kay Nelson in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the future Lori Nelson began performing when she was a mere two and a half years old, and was already a show biz veteran when her family moved to Hollywood in the late 1930s. Signed by Universal at the beginning of the fabulous fifties, Lori experienced the last gasp of the studio star system before free-lancing in the latter half of the decade. For *Scarlet Street*, she remembered her career with honesty, wit, and considerable affection....

**Lori Nelson:** Well, I was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I'm an only child. We moved to Terrero, New Mexico, which is about 60 miles above Santa Fe, a little mining town up in the mountains. My father was head superintendent of the mines up there; it was an American Metal Company mine. I had dancing classes and dramatic classes and all those kind of things; I was in little shows in Santa Fe and Terrero. My parents also ran a little movie theater. They got a building that used to be a church and outfitted it with projectors and turned it into a theater—after which, it became a house of ill repute! (Laughs)

**Scarlet Street:** You toured New Mexico, didn't you, putting on performances?

**LN:** I was billed as the Shirley Temple of Santa Fe. My mother always wanted me to be in the business. We lived in Terrero till I was five and then we moved to California, first to Culver City and then to Van Nuys, where she continued to pursue my career for me. My relatives and

dad always said that my mother moved us to California to get me into the movies. So, she accomplished it! (Laughs) I was in shows, recitals, and plays. I did photographic modeling and clothes modeling. I was entered in the Little Miss America Contest for children, and I won. I don't remember what year it was—and it would be telling my age, anyway! (Laughs) When I got into high school, my mother wouldn't let me do any more plays and recitals. She wanted me to have a normal high school life.

**SS:** She called a complete halt?

**LN:** I didn't do much of anything, except modeling on the weekends. It was surprising, because my mother had groomed me for acting; it wasn't something that I especially wanted for myself.

**SS:** Were there any exceptions to the "no acting rule?"

**LN:** She took me to Warner Bros. when they were casting *KINGS ROW*, and I auditioned for the role of Cassandra, the little girl who grows up to be Betty Field.





Solly Biano directed the audition and loved me, but I was too young for the part. Then there was talk about a movie on the life of Jean Harlow, with me playing her as a young girl. Nothing came of it, though.

**SS:** How did you reactivate your career?

**LN:** Well, our neighbors were friends with Mylo Frank, an agent. He was married to Sally Forrest, the actress, and our neighbors wanted to introduce me to him in the worst way. My mother finally consented and he signed me to an agency contract. He wanted to take me to MGM to get me a contract. The day that we were supposed to go, though, the fella in the casting department was taken to the hospital with an emergency appendectomy. We were all ready to go, so Mylo Frank said he had another meeting for me—he wasn't going to let the opportunity go by! He said, "You've got an appointment at Universal with Rufus LeMaire." He was head of the studio and he liked me very much. He sent me to the drama department, which was headed by Sophie Rosenstein, who was then married to Gig Young. I worked on some scenes with some of the contract players, and we got up to speed. About two weeks later, the front-office people came to the department to see the scenes performed by perspective contract players. That was on a Friday afternoon, and on Saturday morning Sophie Rosenstein called and said they were offering me a seven-year contract. She said she called personally because she didn't want to keep me in suspense over the weekend. I was 16, and I hadn't yet graduated from high school. I completed my senior year in the little red school house on the lot.

**TOP LEFT:** Lori Nelson, Gilbert Roland, Jane Russell, and Richard Egan take a moment to dry off in the unimaginatively titled *UNDERWATER* (1955). **TOP CENTER:** Nelson was on hand to witness the penultimate Dean Martin (pictured) and Jerry Lewis opus—the ironically-named *PARDNERS* (1956). **TOP RIGHT:** Nelson, Barbara Eden, and Merry Anders took over for Betty Grable, Marilyn Monroe, and Lauren Bacall in the TV sitcom version of the 1953 film *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE*. **PAGE 45:** John Agar takes time out from examining the Gill Man to give Nelson the eye in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955).



**SS:** What was it like being a contract player?

**LN:** Well, it was the tail end of the contract stable, as they called it; they called it a stable, I guess, 'cause there were so many of us. (Laughs) A lot of the studios had them, but Universal had the biggest group of people under contract and the most active training program. We'd have our drama classes in the morning with Sophie Rosenstein, our dance classes with Hal Belfore, and then we'd go to voice and diction classes. Then we'd go to the gym and work out, and then we'd go on to the back lot. They had a full stable of horses. They made a lot of Westerns, and the cowboys and wranglers would teach us how to ride and mount and dismount the horses. Then we'd go to the projection rooms and watch movies. Sophie Rosenstein would be there and we'd critique the movies. We learned a lot that way. It was like going to college for actors; it was the most wonderful training that you could ever get anywhere, and it's never existed since! I feel very fortunate to have been a part of that era in Hollywood.

**SS:** How did Dixie Kay become Lori Nelson?

**LN:** The studio, naturally. Actually, before we settled on "Lori," they named me "Dorothy Nelson" and didn't tell me! I went to the studio one day and everyone said, "Hi, Dorothy!" and "How are you, Dorothy?" and I didn't know they were talking to me! When I found out, I said, "I'm not a Dorothy. I don't like the name Dorothy." So they thought it over and settled on "Lori." They figured they'd used "Laurie" as a last name for Piper Laurie, so they could use "Lori" as a first name for me. (Laughs)

**SS:** Who were some of your fellow contractees?

**LN:** Well, Piper Laurie, of course, and Tony Curtis, Rock Hudson, Jeff Chandler, Shelley Winters, Clint Eastwood, Clint Walker, Peggy Dow, Peggy Castle, Barbara Rush, Susan Cabot, Richard Long, Mara Corday, Hugh O'Brien...

**SS:** That's quite a lineup!

**LN:** It was a wonderful time! I was also friends with some of the kids from the other studios. Tab Hunter was one of my very favorite people, and so was Debbie Reynolds. Tab and Debbie and I used to hang out together a lot; we'd have par-



ties at each other's houses and dress up for Halloween and go to premieres together. It was the great days of Hollywood—actually, the tail end of the great days in Hollywood.

**SS:** This was your mother's dream. How did your father feel about it?

**LN:** As a matter of fact, he'd been at Universal before me; he'd been hired to work in the machine shop. He'd left to work for Republic by the time I began at Universal. At Republic, he invented a process to eliminate the flicker on movie screens, and his department won an Academy Award. Naturally, the department head accepted the Oscar; my dad wasn't even invited to the ceremony!

**SS:** You mentioned the stables. Had you ridden horses before coming to Universal?

**LN:** I'd ridden all the time as a kid, so I knew how to ride pretty well. I did some trick riding at one time. There were some folks out in the San Fernando Valley who did circus riding and taught people how to trick ride. You'd stand up and ride around in a circle on the horse without holding on, and then you'd mount and dismount while the horse was riding. I learned how to do that when I was a kid, but a lot of the contract people had never been on a horse before.

**SS:** How was Clint Eastwood as a rider?

**LN:** I don't remember whether he knew how to ride when he arrived, but he certainly learned how to ride! He did *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*; he had a bit part in a laboratory scene. He had two lines and a mouse in his pocket. He was a lab technician. Clint became a big star, but they told him he'd never make it because he wasn't leading man material and he had too long a neck and too big an Adam's apple. They told Burt Reynolds that he'd never be a star because he was already losing his hair. Both of them went to Italy and made Spaghetti Westerns and, when the films were released over here, they came back as instant stars!

**SS:** Was it because of your riding prowess that you made so many Westerns?

**LN:** That's probably one of the reasons. I did several Western movies and guest episodes on almost every Western that



*"John Agar was a very sweet man—a very sweet, nice, gentle person. Rock Hudson was the happiest guy; he always had a ready smile and a ready laugh. Of course, there were all those arranged dates. Later on, Rock started dating Marilyn Maxwell. Marilyn knew he was gay, but, oh, she was so in love with Rock; she wanted to have his baby! She didn't care if he was gay or not . . . ."*

was on the air at the time—WAGON TRAIN, GUNSMOKE, HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL, SUGARFOOT . . . .

SS: What was your first film?

LN: It was MA AND PA KETTLE AT THE FAIR, and the second was BEND OF THE RIVER. We went on location to Oregon. We were there for almost a month in Portland and also up at Timberline Lodge. It was the first time that I'd ever been away from home. I was 17 when I made that movie.

SS: It must have been a change going from Marjorie Main and Percy Kilbride as Ma and Pa Kettle to James Stewart.

LN: Yes, it was! The Kettle pictures were a spinoff from THE EGG AND I. Percy Kilbride was just like the character he played in those films, very quiet and shy and kind of mischievous, but really terribly sweet. Marjorie was so rough and tough and so bossy, just like she was in the movies. I don't mean to suggest she was mean, only that she was very strong-willed. They were great foils for each other!

SS: BEND OF THE RIVER is considered a classic Western.

LN: Jimmy Stewart was a great man, a great gentleman. He was very helpful and fatherly to a young girl my age. He was one of my idols, one of my favorites, and it was a big thrill to be in a movie with him. Rock Hudson played my boyfriend. He was so handsome that I honestly did

have a crush on him, and I didn't yet know that he was gay. Rock and I went on to become great friends; we had a lot of fun together. Rock and Julie Adams and I went on tour for BEND OF THE RIVER. We went all over the East Coast and rode the train from city to city. We had more laughs, the three of us; we had the greatest time in the world!

SS: Like many stars of that period and even today, Rock Hudson led a double life.

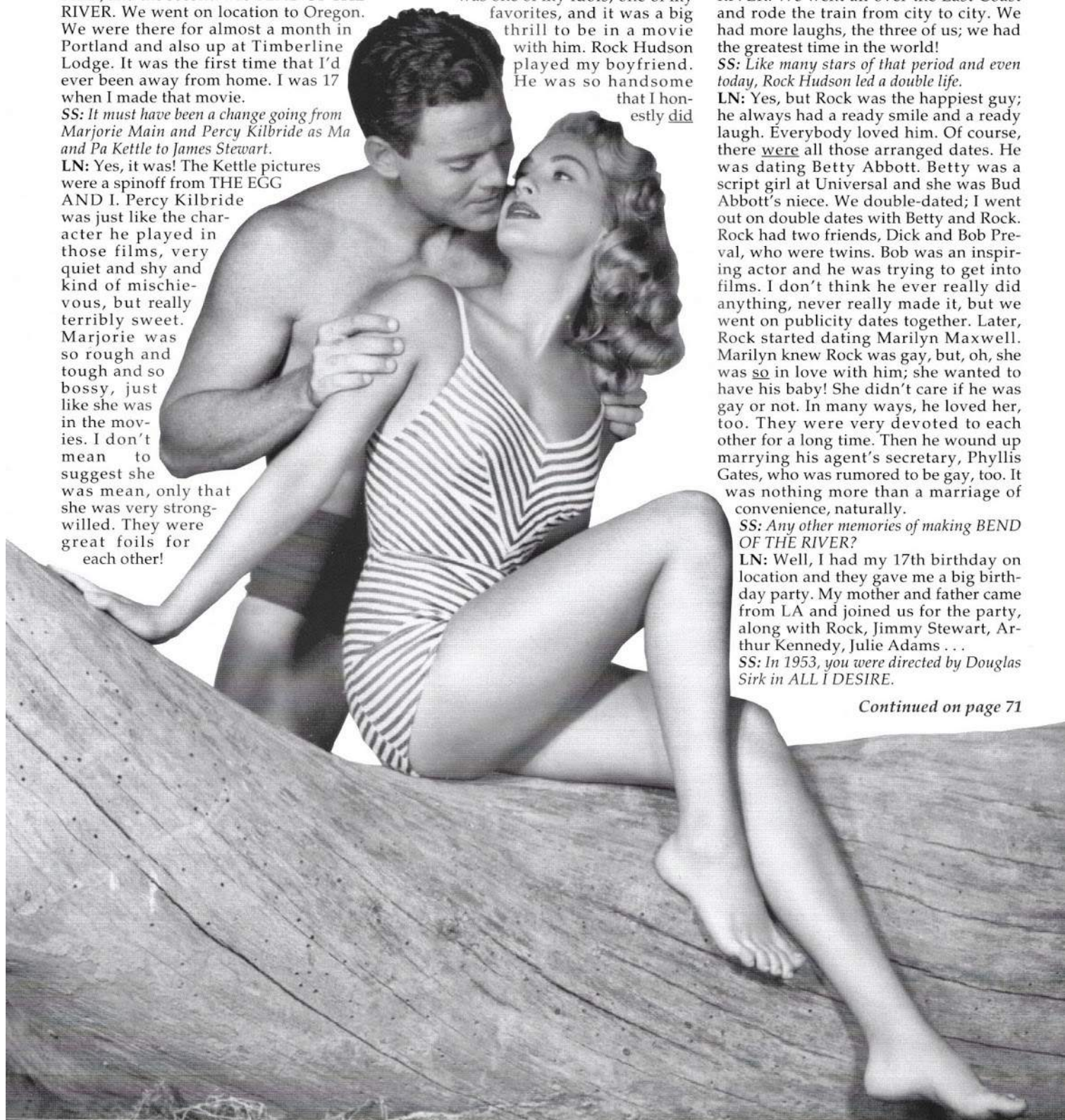
LN: Yes, but Rock was the happiest guy; he always had a ready smile and a ready laugh. Everybody loved him. Of course, there were all those arranged dates. He was dating Betty Abbott. Betty was a script girl at Universal and she was Bud Abbott's niece. We double-dated; I went out on double dates with Betty and Rock. Rock had two friends, Dick and Bob Preval, who were twins. Bob was an inspiring actor and he was trying to get into films. I don't think he ever really did anything, never really made it, but we went on publicity dates together. Later, Rock started dating Marilyn Maxwell. Marilyn knew Rock was gay, but, oh, she was so in love with him; she wanted to have his baby! She didn't care if he was gay or not. In many ways, he loved her, too. They were very devoted to each other for a long time. Then he wound up marrying his agent's secretary, Phyllis Gates, who was rumored to be gay, too. It was nothing more than a marriage of convenience, naturally.

SS: Any other memories of making BEND OF THE RIVER?

LN: Well, I had my 17th birthday on location and they gave me a big birthday party. My mother and father came from LA and joined us for the party, along with Rock, Jimmy Stewart, Arthur Kennedy, Julie Adams . . .

SS: In 1953, you were directed by Douglas Sirk in ALL I DESIRE.

*Continued on page 71*





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### THE CREATURE TRILOGY

Continued from page 42

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The date doesn't get very far before it's interrupted by the film's fourth example of intelligent animal competition—Helen's German shepherd, Chris—whom she refers to half-jokingly as her boyfriend. With the chimp, the dog, and the porpoise all given screen time, the world of animal intelligence is well represented, and one assumes the filmmakers want us to consider the Creature in this light. Naturally, we don't see the Creature as an animal at all, but more as a stand-in for our own repressed, childish rage, rage that has been simmering since we were first sent to our rooms for some "unfair" reason as a child.

Despite Helen's many suitors, Clete has the green light, but still he hesitates. He reminds Helen (and himself) that he's here only to "study the Creature's response to stimuli;" his own reaction to Helen's stimuli are invalid. Though he's much more in touch with his emotions than his predecessors were in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, Clete still sees emotion more as a weakness than a strength.

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If we think Helen is surrendering to science totally, however, we're mistaken. After their day's work, Clete and Helen retire to the beach and discuss their future before that big cradle of life, the ocean. "Most of the kids I went to undergraduate school with are already married and have children," Helen says, asking Clete what he wants out of life. "I'm a man; I don't have to make a choice," he smugly replies. As a female, and thus a "natural" nurturer, Helen has already fought a huge battle with herself just by staying in school instead of having kids. There's an unspoken implication that her time is running out. Clete needs to make up his mind whether to marry and reproduce, or leave her to Chris and Joe Hayes. It's a two-way street of pressure, with Helen pretending to be a scientist to get a husband, and Clete trying to be romantic without compromising his scientific imperative. As they kiss, Chris the dog—like the Creature, a defender of the natural order—shakes himself off, spraying them with salt water and blocking Clete's romantic overture. The scene is mirrored later, when Helen tells Clete that she pities the Creature ("all alone in his tank with no one to talk to") and Clete attempts to forbid her from entering the pool again. He's right; Helen's sympathy fuels the Creature's own sex drive, heightening his strength. Whenever Helen forgets to be clinical and starts shining her lamp of sympathy, science and order break down.

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**LEFT:** The Gill Man (Ben Chapman) carries Kay (Julie Adams) through his dark, underground lair and (according to Chapman in this issue's interview) almost knocks her out on a rock! **RIGHT:** Joe Hayes (John Bromfield) tries to wake Gilly from his coma in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.

ing high-point in the series, even in 2-D—after all the abuse, the Creature gets to dish some of it out, and the terrified Ocean Park tourists race around in all directions. The announcer cries, "The Gill Man has escaped! This is an emergency! Head toward your cars!" This is the first time that cars, the symbol of fifties prosperity, appear in the series. As a refuge from the rampage of the environment we sought to tame, they prove wholly inadequate. On his way to the ocean, the Gill Man flings one over, easily illustrating the ineffectuality of this defense.

As the Creature disappears into the waves, one feels a sense of relief. The scenes of his torture in the tank were long and uncomfortable. Clete's methods of "teaching" the Creature have left a bad taste. Never once does he say "good boy," or give the Creature a reward. The Creature

never asked to retire to Florida, after all; science just felt it was its inalienable right to extract him from his home and inflict all manner of torture on him. Consider the spate of popular "evo-revenge" films in the seventies—*FROGS* (1972), *ORCA* (1977), and *THE DAY OF THE ANIMALS* (1977), for instance—and one may recall a similar feeling of rooting wholeheartedly against man in favor of the natural world. Similarly, the death of Joe Hayes, the Creature's abductor, doesn't tweak our moral outrage half as much as the abuse the animal receives at the hands of Clete.

Newspaper headlines take over for the announcer: "Gill Man reported in Miami." Scientists believe the Creature is heading home to the Amazon, but once again they're

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**LEFT:** Let Hurts put you in the driver's seat! After maiming and killing some tourists and employees at Ocean Park, the enraged Creature overturns an innocent auto and makes his way to the ocean. **RIGHT:** Having lost his gills in a fire, Blackie Lagoon almost drowns when he takes to the water in *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*.





# BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP



## JOHN BROMFIELD

interviewed by Jeff Jessings

It was only fitting that rugged, athletic John Bromfield was sent to the Black Lagoon in 1955's *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* to capture the Gill Man and bring him to civilization—the South Bend, Indiana native had become a California fisherman before landing his first acting role (in 1948's *HARPOON*), and returned to the profession 10 years later, following his final role on the television series *U.S. MARSHALL*. During his decade before the camera, Bromfield worked with some of the best actors in the business, including Barbara Stanwyck, Pat O'Brien, Burt Lancaster, Peter Lorre, Beverly Garland, and Lon Chaney, Jr. in such films as *SORRY, WRONG NUMBER* (1948); *ROPE OF SAND* (1949); *THE FURIES* (1950); *HOLD THAT LINE* (1952); *EASY TO LOVE* (1953); *CRIME AGAINST JOE* (1956); *MANFISH* (1956); and *CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON* (1956).

Recently, *Scarlet Street* hooked John Bromfield for this exclusive interview . . .

**Scarlet Street:** What led from your real-life role as fisherman to becoming an actor in the film *HARPOON*?

**John Bromfield:** Well, I was fishing in Venice, California, and I was mending nets on the pier. These three guys came up to me and said, "What are you doing there?" We had these big Japanese glass ball nets, and I explained to them what I was doing. They thanked me and walked up to the end of the pier to have lunch, then they stopped and started talking and looking at me. They talked some more and looked some more, and then they came back over and said, "Would you be interested in going to Alaska and harpooning whale?" I looked at these guys

like they were nuts! (Laughs) I said, "I couldn't do that now, anyway, because we're fishing for sharks and these are shark nets." One of them said, "Oh, well," and they thanked me and walked away 40 or 50 yards. Then one of them came back and gave me his card, and said, "If you change your mind, we're in Beverly Hills at this address. Give us a call and we'd like you to have lunch and talk with us." When I got home, I told my mother what had happened and I put the card in the dresser. A few days later, my mother asked, "Did you ever answer those boys and tell them that you're not interested?" I said, "Well, I halfway told them." And she said, "Well, you better call them and

tell them, because it's the only right thing to do."

**SS:** Mothers always know best.

**JB:** So I called them, and they talked me into coming up to Beverly Hills. I put on a little sport coat and went. Well, they brought some people down from the agency to see me and to shake hands, and I went home that afternoon with a contract for the film *HARPOON*! That was my first venture into acting.

**SS:** What can you tell us about the film?

**JB:** It was a takeoff on the old film *NANOOK OF THE NORTH* from 20th Century Fox. The movie's director and producer, Ewing Scott, had also worked on *NANOOK OF THE NORTH*. It was a very





This is either a photograph of hunky John Bromfield judging the 1952 Ugliest Dame in Hollywood Contest (we're betting on the blonde) or a publicity picture from *HOLD THAT LINE* (1952), starring the Bowery Boys (Huntz Hall, Leo Gorcey, Benny Bartlett, David Gorcey, and Gill Stratton, Jr.) in drag.

nice picture to work on; it was filmed in Alaska. A funny thing—while the film was being made, I had 21 uncashed checks. It took 21 weeks to make the movie, and every check I received, I just put away. I mean, what are you going to do—everything was already paid for, and we were aboard ship.

**SS:** Was it dangerous making *HARPOON*?

**JB:** Well, we had to harpoon whales in a big old canoe, only this canoe was made from walrus hide. In the movie, we had a crew of eight Eskimos and myself on the ship. I played an Eskimo type guy—not actually an Eskimo, but I lived with the Eskimos. We stayed up there in a schoolhouse in the city of Nome. That's where they put up the company, all 30 of us.

**SS:** You worked with Burt Lancaster a couple of times, first on *SORRY, WRONG NUMBER* in 1948 and then the following year on *ROPE OF SAND*.

**JB:** Well, that's when I first worked with Hal Wallis at Paramount. The film was a takeoff on *CASABLANCA*, with some of the same cast, except for Humphrey Bogart. We had Peter Lorre, Claude Rains, and Paul Henreid. It was about the diamond police; we were protecting the diamonds in the sand in South Africa. In the beginning, I was just playing featured parts before I really got star billing.

**SS:** Did you get on well with your costars?

**JB:** Burt was a hell of a nice guy to work with, really. And Peter Lorre was wonderful; he had that great voice. Claude Rains was famous for his part in *THE INVISIBLE MAN*. Claude was a bit stuffy, you might say. He wasn't nasty or any-

thing like that—he was all right—he was just from the stage in England and all that type of thing.

**SS:** Tell us about *CRIME AGAINST JOE*.

**JB:** Oh, that's my wife Mary's favorite movie of mine. I made that picture for United Artists, and I played the lead. I worked with Julie London on that picture. I played Joe, an artist who is wrongfully arrested and accused of a murder. Julie London played the woman who supplies Joe with an alibi. In the end, Joe is eventually released, solves the crime, and identifies the real murderer. Then I did a picture called *EASY TO LOVE*, with Esther Williams. That was a big MGM musical and we did a lot of swimming. It was a fun picture to make.

**SS:** *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* was an enormous hit. Universal followed its success with a sequel, *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.

**JB:** Oh, yes, that was a fantastic picture from Universal! They wanted me for the part, so they called up my agent, and I was hired. I played a scientist/caretaker for the Creature. John Agar also played the part of a scientist. We filmed part of it at Universal in California, and rest of the movie in Florida, which made for a nice location. We filmed the scenes that were supposed to be on the Amazon River on an old boat, which we worked off of. An actor by the name of Nestor Paiva also worked on the boat with me, a terrific guy. When we filmed the early scenes, where I'm to be submerged in the river in my quest to find the Creature, I had to wear this big deep-sea diver outfit,

and it was quite an ordeal with the big huge helmet. When I have the outfit on, I'm submerged into the water and I then encounter the Creature and a struggle pursues. A stuntman did all my underwater scenes, while another stuntman by the name of Ricou Browning did all the underwater stunts as the Creature.

**SS:** Yes, he did the underwater scenes as the Gill Man in all three Creature films. In *REVENGE*, the Creature on land was played by Tom Hennesy.

**JB:** Ricou Browning was a marvelous guy; he was also in the film *EASY TO LOVE* with me. Ricou was amazing in the way he could swim and maneuver in the Creature costume. He would just glide through the water with ease, although it must have been a challenge for him to breathe. Tom was another great guy. He played the Creature on land, because he's a very big man; he was way over six feet tall. When he wore the costume, he looked twice as large! Tom looked like he was eight feet tall! (Laughs) Ricou is much shorter than Tom, so Tom was used for the land Creature because of his size, while Ricou was used because of his great swimming ability.

**SS:** Even hampered by the costume, Tom Hennesy does quite well as the Creature.

**JB:** Oh, yes! I'm sure the biggest challenge for Tom was simply walking around inside this big costume. He had to be careful not to bump into anything or trip over things.

**SS:** *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* also starred the late John Agar and the beautiful Lori Nelson.



**JB:** John and Lori were a joy. We all had a nice time on the picture. The Florida location was just beautiful, and we also had some great food while we were there. If I remember correctly, I ate a lot of lobster! (Laughing.) I mean, why not have lobster; the company is paying for it!

**SS:** *Much of the film is set at an aquarium.*

**JB:** The aquarium scenes were filmed at Marineland in Florida. A lot of the scenes focused around me trying to revive the Creature in the tank. I'd hold him by the waist and gently glide him around in the water, which is how they revive certain animals in the water.

**SS:** *Any memories of director Jack Arnold?*

**JB:** Jack Arnold was a real professional and wanted to get the job done right. He made some big films back then. I got to see him work from the sidelines, because my character, Joe, is killed off early in the movie—which was all right, because they had to pay me just the same. (Laughs) I was satisfied with my performance and with the film. The movie made a ton of money; it made more money than the first film, because while the first movie was gaining popularity, the second film came out and built on that. By then, the audience knew what they were going to see, so they packed the theaters.

**SS:** *Did you see the film in a public movie theater when it was released?*

**JB:** Yes, I did! It was great to see it with an audience. I went just to see their reaction to the film, and they loved it!

**SS:** *You fought a monster again in CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON.*

**JB:** Yes, the picture was about a creature that was terrorizing everyone. I made CURUCU with Beverly Garland, who's a nice gal. I enjoyed making that film very much, really, because I love fishing and the Amazon River is full of fish. When I had some down time, I'd just go fishing. (Laughs) We had a good American crew

on CURUCU, and we also had an Argentine crew. They have a ruling down there—an American crew can work, but you have to have an Argentine crew as well.

**SS:** *Is that the usual policy when you film in foreign countries?*

**JB:** Not all countries, but quite a few of them have that policy. In the long run, it benefits the American studios, because they save a lot of money hiring a crew in another country.

**SS:** *What did you think of the beast itself in CURUCU?*

**JB:** I thought it was all right. In the movie, the Amazon people try to warn visitors of this infamous creature, because if they venture out into the jungle, they'll be in trouble, because that's where the monster lives. I had a lot of fun making it.

**SS:** *In 1956, you were back in the water for a film called MANFISH.*

**JB:** I thought it would be a great picture to work on, and I was right. Manfish is a diver, not another monster like Curucu or the Creature From the Black Lagoon. In the film, treasure hunters dive for sunken treasure on the bottom of the ocean floor. Pirates left behind the treasures long ago. It was an action drama film, which also starred Lon Chaney, Jr.

**SS:** *Did you like Lon Chaney Jr.?*

**JB:** Oh, Lon was a great guy! He was such a wonderful person, with a big heart. Lon was like a big teddy bear, you might say, and he was also a great actor. He should have won an award for his work in the picture OF MICE AND MEN. He comes across in a lot of his screen parts as a rough type of character, but he was really just the nicest guy.

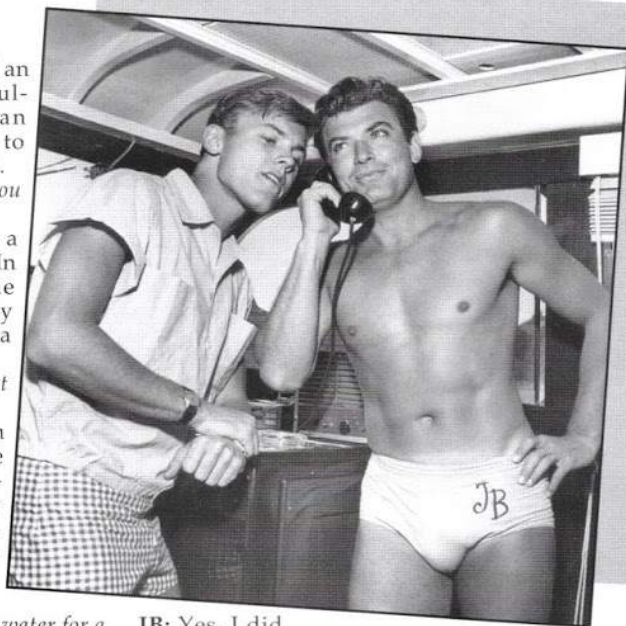
**SS:** *Toward the end of the fifties, you became associated with Desilu Productions.*

**JB:** Yes, I did

a few television series in the fifties for Desilu. The shows were SHERIFF OF COCHISE and U.S. MARSHALL, and they were great shows to work on. I played a character named Frank Morgan on both of them. Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball were the executive producers and they were wonderful people. I remember Lucy being just like her character on I LOVE LUCY. I enjoyed doing Westerns, and back then the shows were very popular. In between takes, the actors and crew would play football. (Laughs)

**SS:** *Have you stayed in touch with any of your costars over the years?*

**JB:** No, that's the sad part of show business. When you're working on a show or picture, you always say that you'll get together with people when its over and do this and do that, but you never end up seeing the people again. When it's done, it's done.



**TOP RIGHT:** Publicity stills from the fifties reached a height of camp absurdity, as regular Scarlet Streeters know from this bizarre photo of Tab Hunter and John Bromfield. **LEFT:** Joe Hayes (Bromfield) pits his strength and cunning against the Gill Man once too often in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955). **RIGHT:** Hayes is a dead fish, the Creature has fled the scene, and Helen Dobson and Clete Ferguson (Lori Nelson and John Agar) are quite chagrined.







# THE CREATURE TRILOGY

Continued from page 48

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The Creature checks in at the motel. There follows a nicely risqué shot, prefiguring a similar scene in *PSYCHO* (1960), of him spying on Helen as she takes off her robe and heads into the bathroom for a shower. The Creature enters the room, but Chris rushes to attack him and is killed (offscreen). Cleto hears the dog from his room next door and, investigating, apparently scares the Creature off. We learn that, somewhere

during the newspaper headline interlude, Cleto and Helen have decided to continue seeing each other after he finishes his research. "It will be the longest three months," Helen says. Civilized lovers are always finding excuses not to be together; Cleto is stalling his surrender. Chris is missing. We pan



to the Creature as he stands spying on the young couple, the dead body of Chris at his feet. The Creature has disposed of rivals number two (Joe) and three (Chris); number one is next.

The following day, Cleto and Helen set sail. ("We can take a leisurely cruise up the river and have dinner in Jacksonville," says Cleto. "My plane doesn't leave until midnight.") Needless to say, the Creature comes along for the ride, swimming just below the waves, watching their every move. The sequence echoes the scenes on the Rita in the first film, though they're much more obvious in their Freudian symbolism. (At one point, we even see an image of the submerged Creature superimposed over Cleto and Helen embracing.) On deck, Helen is distraught about another member of her menagerie. "Now stop worrying about Chris," Cleto tells her. "For a scientist, I sure am a sentimental fool," she says. That her concern is considered foolish can only mean Cleto's anticompassionate mantras are rubbing off. Like Kay, Helen really does have her feet firmly in both camps.

The lovers go for a swim and initiate a weird variation on the erotic water ballet of *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. As Cleto and Helen swim along the surface, the Creature moves below them, forming a monstrous *menage à trois*. (It was, after all, Cleto who poked the Gill Man with that phallic cattle prod, and the animal clearly harbors fear and respect for the man.) The Creature here seems a weird mix of an unborn, jealous child and an expression of erotic hostility between Cleto and Helen, who are really as much at war—and as intertwined psychically—as Mark and David from the first film. Both Cleto and Helen admit that they're in the grip of something stronger than their chosen belief system can explain. "Scientists are funny," Helen says while they stroll on the dock after dancing at a swinging horseshoe jazz club. "We probe and measure and dissect... but with really important things we're as stupid as the cavemen." The "important thing," of course, is love. Scientists know nothing about it, yet "it makes the world go round. Is it a fact? Is it chemistry? Electricity?" This phrasing of the eternal question can be read as "romantic scientist speculation," but it can also be broadened to summarize one of the underlying themes of the trilogy. Science is trapped by the delusion that it can conquer and understand the natural world. In trying to outdo himself with technical advancement, man risks losing contact with his own existence, his true source of power. We think of Lucas' similar statement, that civilized men are weaklings and the Creature represents a more powerful force, one we fear because it is unknowable on a conscious level.

While Cleto and Helen philosophize, the Creature lurks below them, staring at their legs; literally he is at the root of Cleto and Helen's romantic bond, their "love



child." Helen and Cleto head back into the bar, where the band is really heating up. It is then that the Creature decides to rise from the depths and crash the party. It's another highlight of the film, with the band members doing double-takes at the sight of the interloper and gradually losing the beat. All hell breaks loose, and the Creature grabs Helen and takes off with her into the water. The unborn child—petulant, needy, demanding in his precognitive but still Oedipal fury—won't even let his parents enjoy a night out on the town. He invades their night life, the way newborns will, claiming mom for himself.

Though the Gill Man finally has his girl, he can't get very far with her, as she can't breathe underwater. He must continually bring her up on the land, where he lays her down on the beach in Sleeping Beauty repose (recalling Kay's place on the first film's primitive altar). Like Kong with Ann Darrow, Beauty is bound to kill the Beast; she's just too high maintenance. Whatever bizarre prehistoric mating ritual the Creature is trying to enact, there's just not enough time or privacy in the hurly burly world of modern man. As in the original, the Creature abducting the girl marks a serious turning point for viewers, as our empathy transfers to the hero and his abducted heroine. In each instance, the Creature could easily free himself of the human element, either by letting the Rita out of the lagoon or swimming home to Brazil. In each case, the love the Creature has developed for the heroine keeps him tied to civilization much longer than is good for him. The mystery of the Creature lures the scientists too close to the darkness in Act One, and conversely, the mystery of the female lures the Creature too close to the light in Act Two. (A radio advisory tells citizens to keep their house lights on, as the Creature is afraid of bright light.) Our loyalties switch sides against the transgressor in each case, though some sympathy remains.

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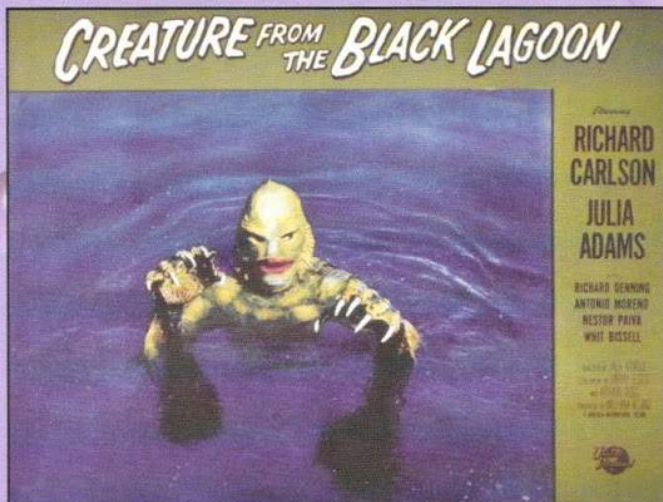
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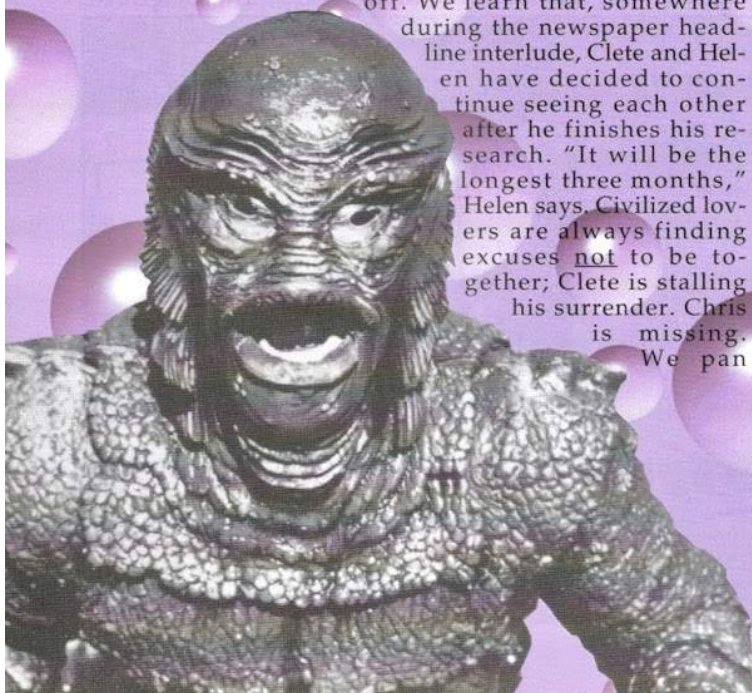


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# THE CREATURE'S NEW FEATURES

# TOM HENNESSY

interviewed by Michael Michalski

**U**nheralded and unsung—an anonymous contributor to some of the most memorable films ever produced—Tom Hennesy will never top a list of the who's who of fifties and sixties Hollywood. Yet even among the array of legendary stars he can count as colleagues, including John Wayne, John Ford, Rock Hudson, and Randolph Scott, perhaps none were as versatile or diverse as this native Californian. For just as a powerful army needs dutiful and skilled foot soldiers, every great movie needs its stuntmen, bit players, animal wranglers, and unknown, selfless supporting cast—or maybe, they just need Tom Hennesy.

Safe to say, if you've never seen a flick in which Hennesy played some sort of role, either on or off the screen, you really haven't seen enough movies, or at least many memorable ones—for example, *THE ROBE* (1953), *THE CAINE MUTINY* (1954), *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* (1956), *THE ALAMO* (1961), and *STAGECOACH* (1966). It seems whenever and wherever the clapboard cracked, Hennesy was usually not too far away performing whatever task needed to be done. Even if it often meant a lot of pain for little glory, it was all in a day's work for the former USC/UCLA gridiron tackle.

Born August 4, 1923, in Los Angeles, Hennesy enjoyed a comfortable upbringing in La Canada, California as the son of a founder of a prominent oil company. Following work as an extra in the early forties, he began doubling such screen luminaries as Scott, Rod Cameron, and Jeff Chandler, while working offscreen as a teacher to Tinseltown's child stars, including Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Tommy Rettig, Tim Considine, Molly Bee, and Walt Disney's Mouseketeers.

Now retired, the outspoken former Navy veteran, police officer, and forest ranger recalled his many careers for *Scarlet Street*, including perhaps his most arduous assignment, playing the Gill Man in 1955's *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*....

**Tom Hennesy:** My father was a petroleum geologist, one of the founders of an oil production company. For many years, I was company director before we sold it in 1991. Growing up, I enjoyed La Canada, which was very rural at that time. It's located between Pasadena and Glendale, in the foothills. I lived close to the Orosoco Canyon, which went up in the mountains a considerable distance. Most of the kids had horses or burros, and I used to do a lot of hiking and hunting and horse-backing.

**Scarlet Street:** What was it like at USC as a member of the Trojan football team? You competed in two Rose Bowl games.

**TH:** I started there in November 1942. I was a player in 1943 and 1944, but was plagued by injuries. I had knee surgery in high school and injured it again while I was in the Navy. It knocked me out of a lot of play. All I can say is that I was a member of the team and put in a lot of rough hours! (Laughs) My line coach at USC was former Alabama player Shelby Calhoun. Later, when I came back from the service, he'd transferred to UCLA and

convinced me to transfer instead of going back to USC. I played on the UCLA team in 1946 and 1947 and had the good fortune to play for some top coaches, but I had bad knee injuries again and that knocked me out of football.

**SS:** How did you begin working in film?

**TH:** I'd worked as a stunt man while I was in college and before I went on active duty in the Navy. I did a lot of Westerns.

**SS:** Is that how you became associated with John Ford and John Wayne?

**TH:** No. When I got out of the service, I lived on Catalina Island for a couple of years. I met John Wayne and John Ford when I was living there. Later, I worked on pictures for Ford and with Wayne. Michael Wayne, John's eldest son, became one of my best friends.

**SS:** How did Wayne's persona differ onscreen and off?

**TH:** It depended on where you were and who you were. He was a rough, tough guy. He did a lot of heavy drinking and that resulted in some strange activities and brawls. Personally, I never had any trouble. I worked on a lot of pictures

with him on a lot of locations. I saw a lot of things—he was a wild man when he got going. In his later years, he wouldn't bother to punch somebody out—he'd just grab the nearest thing and throw it at them. (Laughs) It was always interesting; you never knew what was going to happen. He had a really bad temper, and when it wasn't in control....

**SS:** How did you hit it off so well, without doing any actual hitting?

**TH:** We had a similar background. My USC fraternity house was right across the street from his old fraternity house, Sigma Ki. I'm a Kappa Sig. We used to talk about old times. I had quite a bit of fishing experience, and he liked to fish, too. Duke was a good family man, even though his family was broken up by divorces. He still had the kids around a lot. Michael, Patrick, and Ethan all worked in films. Duke also got into the production end, directing and producing—for example, on *THE ALAMO*. He took that on single-handedly and put his fortune into the doggone thing, and it didn't work out as well as he might have hoped.

**SS:** You worked on *THE ALAMO* yourself, and played the eyepatch-wearing Bull.

**TH:** *THE ALAMO* was a gigantic undertaking. I provided practically all the arms and ammunition for that picture. I fabricated some Remington Rolling Block rifles that I'd acquired—about 800, I think. We rigged them safely for picture purposes. I also had a dog in the picture, which got knocked out because of an occurrence that aggravated Wayne.

**SS:** John Wayne fired a dog?

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**SS:** Did they replace the dog?

**TH:** It took two months to find a similar dog. Then I had to have an opaque eye made by a veterinarian and ophthalmologist for the dog to wear in closeups. The dog was supposed to have a fight sequence, but they got rid of him. That's the way Duke did things. He'd been thinking that the damn dog might detract from Richard Widmark or some of the other actors—particularly from his own role, I guess. (Laughs) It was a good excuse to get rid of him.

**SS:** The film *McLINTOCK* was a 1963 Western comedy featuring a spectacular and messy mud-fight sequence.

**TH:** That was really rough! We were in Old Tucson and they had this old pit. It was below freezing and the pit would get a big crust of ice on it every night. They tried to keep it under control with smudge pots; they'd light fires at night to keep it as hot as they could, but they couldn't keep it over maybe 35 degrees. Everybody hated it. When we did the first fall, I was the second guy down. God, it was cold! And it was a rough landing! I was knocked down and had to scramble up and go back down again. It went on for days. In the end, Maureen O'Hara went down, and the Duke himself, but it was a really hairy deal. People got banged up pretty good. I got a bad ankle out of it.

**SS:** Let's backtrack. How did you get involved teaching Hollywood's child actors?

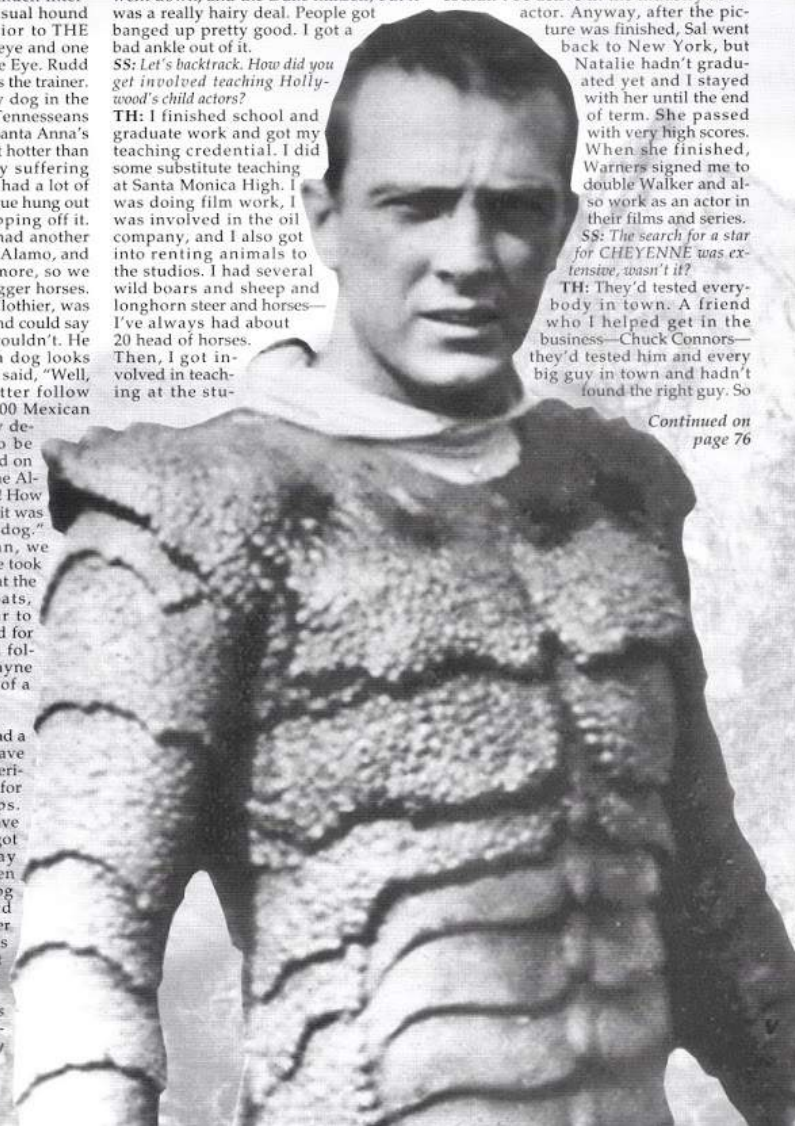
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**SS:** The search for a star for *CHEYENNE* was extensive, wasn't it?

**TH:** They'd tested everybody in town. A friend who I helped get in the business—Chuck Connors—they'd tested him and every big guy in town and hadn't found the right guy. So

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# THE CREATURE'S NEW FEATURES

# TOM HENNESSY

interviewed by Michael Michalski

**U**nheralded and unsung—an anonymous contributor to some of the most memorable films ever produced—Tom Hennesy will never top a list of the who's who of fifties and sixties Hollywood. Yet even among the array of legendary stars he can count as colleagues, including John Wayne, John Ford, Rock Hudson, and Randolph Scott, perhaps none were as versatile or diverse as this native Californian. For just as a powerful army needs dutiful and skilled foot soldiers, every great movie needs its stuntmen, bit players, animal wranglers, and unknown, selfless supporting cast—or maybe, they just need Tom Hennesy.

Safe to say, if you've never seen a flick in which Hennesy played some sort of role, either on or off the screen, you really haven't seen enough movies, or at least many memorable ones—for example, *THE ROBE* (1953), *THE CAINE MUTINY* (1954), *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* (1956), *THE ALAMO* (1961), and *STAGECOACH* (1966). It seems whenever and wherever the clapboard cracked, Hennesy was usually not too far away performing whatever task needed to be done. Even if it often meant a lot of pain for little glory, it was all in a day's work for the former USC/UCLA gridiron tackle.

Born August 4, 1923, in Los Angeles, Hennesy enjoyed a comfortable upbringing in La Canada, California as the son of a founder of a prominent oil company. Following work as an extra in the early forties, he began doubling such screen luminaries as Scott, Rod Cameron, and Jeff Chandler, while working offscreen as a teacher to Tinseltown's child stars, including Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Tommy Rettig, Tim Considine, Molly Bee, and Walt Disney's Mouseketeers.

Now retired, the outspoken former Navy veteran, police officer, and forest ranger recalled his many careers for *Scarlet Street*, including perhaps his most arduous assignment, playing the Gill Man in 1955's *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* . . .

**Tom Hennesy:** My father was a petroleum geologist, one of the founders of an oil production company. For many years, I was company director before we sold it in 1991. Growing up, I enjoyed La Canada, which was very rural at that time. It's located between Pasadena and Glendale, in the foothills. I lived close to the Oreoseco Canyon, which went up in the mountains a considerable distance. Most of the kids had horses or burros, and I used to do a lot of hiking and hunting and horse-backing.

**Scarlet Street:** What was it like at USC as a member of the Trojan football team? You competed in two Rose Bowl games.

**TH:** I started there in November 1942. I was a player in 1943 and 1944, but was plagued by injuries. I had knee surgery in high school and injured it again while I was in the Navy. It knocked me out of a lot of play. All I can say is that I was a member of the team and put in a lot of rough hours! (Laughs) My line coach at USC was former Alabama player Shelby Calhoun. Later, when I came back from the service, he'd transferred to UCLA and

convinced me to transfer instead of going back to USC. I played on the UCLA team in 1946 and 1947 and had the good fortune to play for some top coaches, but I had bad knee injuries again and that knocked me out of football.

**SS:** How did you begin working in film?

**TH:** I'd worked as a stunt man while I was in college and before I went on active duty in the Navy. I did a lot of Westerns.

**SS:** Is that how you become associated with John Ford and John Wayne?

**TH:** No. When I got out of the service, I lived on Catalina Island for a couple of years. I met John Wayne and John Ford when I was living there. Later, I worked on pictures for Ford and with Wayne. Michael Wayne, John's eldest son, became one of my best friends.

**SS:** How did Wayne's persona differ onscreen and off?

**TH:** It depended on where you were and who you were. He was a rough, tough guy. He did a lot of heavy drinking and that resulted in some strange activities and brawls. Personally, I never had any trouble. I worked on a lot of pictures

with him on a lot of locations. I saw a lot of things—he was a wild man when he got going. In his later years, he wouldn't bother to punch somebody out—he'd just grab the nearest thing and throw it at them. (Laughs) It was always interesting; you never knew what was going to happen. He had a really bad temper, and when it wasn't in control . . .

**SS:** How did you hit it off so well, without doing any actual hitting?

**TH:** We had a similar background. My USC fraternity house was right across the street from his old fraternity house, Sigma Ki. I'm a Kappa Sig. We used to talk about old times. I had quite a bit of fishing experience, and he liked to fish, too. Duke was a good family man, even though his family was broken up by divorces. He still had the kids around a lot. Michael, Patrick, and Ethan all worked in films. Duke also got into the production end, directing and producing—for example, on *THE ALAMO*. He took that on single-handedly and put his fortune into the doggone thing, and it didn't work out as well as he might have hoped.



**SS:** You worked on *THE ALAMO* yourself, and played the eyepatch-wearing Bull.

**TH:** *THE ALAMO* was a gigantic undertaking. I provided practically all the arms and ammunition for that picture. I fabricated some Remington Rolling Block rifles that I'd acquired—about 800, I think. We rigged them safely for picture purposes. I also had a dog in the picture, which got knocked out because of an occurrence that aggravated Wayne.

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#### THE CREATURE TRILOGY

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Arnold-influenced THE MONOLITH MONSTERS, before his death in 1959.) Arthur Ross returned to write the screenplay. As a step up in gracious living, THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US takes place not on the Rita, but largely on a sprawling yacht replete with sonar, and commanded by that greasy-haired great of the sci-fi era's twilight years, Jeff Morrow. Ignored by Universal's publicity department, coming out as it did after the hoopla had subsided, the trilogy's conclusion deserves a higher status than it is often granted. It's moody, adult, and low-key, yet still an effective monster movie, sort of a *monstre-noir*, with lots of odd angles and light streaming through the venetian blinds. We even get a *noirish* femme fatale, Marcia Barton (Leigh Snowden), a mix of kept woman and intrepid adventuress. Instead of looking out at the forbidding shore line and shuddering, or dropping a cigarette into the water as Kay did, Marcia opens up at passing sharks with a shotgun. At the film's opening, she's barreling down the highway towards the yacht in her convertible, husband William Barton (Morrow) in the passenger seat, instantly establishing herself as a woman who wears the pants and lives on the edge. For the Creature, now having had some experience with heartbreak and air-breathing dames, she's next on the love chain. From the motherly Kay, to the plucky Helen, to the trouble with a capital T that is Marcia, the Gill Man gets the full spectrum of fifties cinematic femmes.

Arthur Ross receives sole screenwriting credit for THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US. One senses that his philosophies are given free rein in the character of Tom Morgan (Rex Reason) the tall, handsome scientist who becomes the rival of Morrow's obsessively jealous, symbolically impotent millionaire. For the first time in the series, a scientist



grasps the concept that the natural environment—personified in the Creature—is a mirror into man's "whole" self. Morgan's goal is to mend the rip between science and nature that has been so pulled and stretched in the previous two films. For Barton, however, the goal is to stretch the hell out of it, and by studying the Creature's evolution, figure out how to prep man for the stars. He's gathered a team of researchers, including Tom, Doctors Borg (Maurice Manson) and Johnson (James Rawley), and cocky adventurer Jed Grant (Gregg Palmer), to accompany him on his yacht and capture the Gill Man, who has been loose in the Everglades since the conclusion of REVENGE. Their lead is Morteno (Paul Fierro), a local who got mauled by the Creature while hunting alligators in the swamps. Apparently the Gill Man has grown into a kind of eco-avenger, reacting to any perceived violence with violence.

Tom and Barton bicker about their scientific goals, latching onto an old trend from the first film. It's evolved to include loftier topics than whether to kill the Creature or study it. Tom wants to "learn from nature, help nature" as a way to align ourselves closer to the planet, live in harmony with it, before we destroy it. Barton almost thinks we're meant to destroy it and move on: "Modern man is earthbound to this planet, which he devours, and which eventually will fail to support him." It's earth's job to support man's gluttony, according to Barton, and when it drops dead in its tracks trying to accommodate, man must have a surrogate so his feeding can continue uninterrupted.

The expedition finds and tracks the Creature through sonar (a predecessor to similar scenes in 1979's ALIEN). Eventually he's captured and, in the process, badly burned. His gills are in fact burnt off, and so he seems destined to

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# FLY ON THE WALL BRETT HALSEY

interviewed by Michael Michalski

**Y**oung Charles Hand was just another teenage page at the CBS Studios in Burbank, California when he was signed to a Universal Studios stock contract in 1953. Charles became Brett, Hand was altered to Halsey, and a career was born. Although it would lead him away from Hollywood to the fantastic world of Italian cinema (his adventures encapsulated in his 1978 novel *The Magnificent Strangers*), Halsey eventually found his way back to the States for several other TV and film roles.

Fondly remembered by horror and science fiction fans for his roles in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955), *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959), *THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE* (1959), and *TWICE TOLD TALES* (1963), Halsey is now a professor of theater at the University of Costa Rica. In this brief excerpt from an interview to be concluded in an upcoming issue, he spoke with *Scarlet Street* about his brief encounter with the Creature From the Black Lagoon . . .

*Scarlet Street:* Like other young Universal contract players, you quickly became part of the Ma and Pa Kettle brood of children. In *MA AND PA KETTLE AT HOME*, the story revolves around your character of Elwin and whether or not he'll win a scholarship to agricultural college.

**Brett Halsey:** That was my first lead. It was great fun and a great learning experience. Percy Kilbride was one of the sweetest, nicest men you would ever want to meet. Marjorie Main was a sourpuss. It seemed to me that she was just like her screen persona. There was another actor in the film, Alan Mowbray, who had been a star in the thirties and the forties—he had a supporting role. He was a comedian and very good. I learned a lot from him. The director, Charles Lamont, was patient, too. I was working with Alice Kelley, who was a classmate and friend. I don't know what ever happened to her. I think she married and retired.

**SS:** Lori Nelson was also a Universal contract player and a member of the Kettle clan, though not in the same film.

**BH:** Oh, yes! Lori and I became friends, longtime friends. If I was still living in Hollywood, I'd still be seeing Lori. She was a good pal. She was part of our long-term group of friends.

**SS:** Lori was the leading lady in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, in which you had a role. The film was shot in 3-D.

**BH:** That was one of the things we had to do as contract actors—when 3-D came in. They did tons of tests, and we

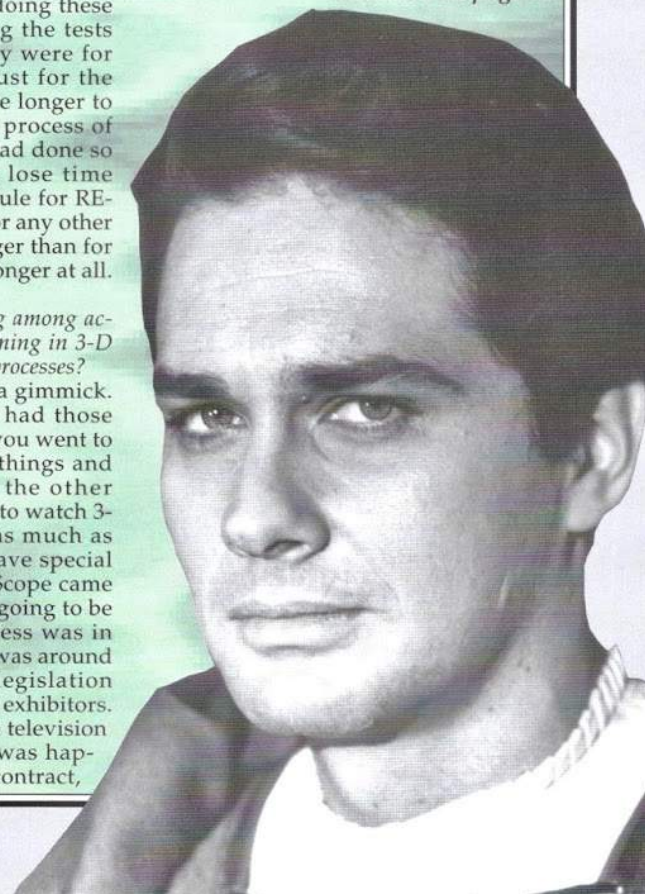
were the guinea pigs. It was hard on your eyes, because they put so much light on you in the test shots. They really saturated the set with light. I don't remember exactly why, but it hurt my eyes—not while we were shooting, but doing these tests. I don't remember seeing the tests afterwards. I don't think they were for public viewing; they were just for the camera department. It did take longer to set up for 3-D because of the process of using two cameras, but they had done so many tests that they didn't lose time during production. The schedule for *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* or any other 3-D picture was not much longer than for regular pictures, if they were longer at all. It just took longer to light.

**SS:** What was the general feeling among actors in the fifties in regard to filming in 3-D and CinemaScope and other new processes?

**BH:** Well, 3-D was viewed as a gimmick. There was a problem—they had those glasses they'd give you when you went to the movie. They were paper things and one lens would be red and the other blue. It was a bit of a nuisance to watch 3-D, and I think that killed it as much as anything. Then they had to have special projectors and so on. CinemaScope came later and we knew that it was going to be part of the future. The business was in such turmoil at the time. That was around the time that the anti-trust legislation separated the studios from the exhibitors. The box office went down, and television came in. No one knew what was happening, but being kids under contract,

it really didn't concern us. To act in front of 3-D or CinemaScope or black-and-white didn't make any difference, except for one picture when I worked

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# THE DEVIL ON CASTRO STREET

## and Other Skirmishes in the Culture Wars

by David J. Skal

**N**o matter the time of the year, it was always a bit like Halloween at the Black Cat Cafe.

The popular hangout in San Francisco's North Beach had long been a bohemian haunt—a completely unsupernatural haunt, to be sure, even though it had chosen one of

the major icons of Halloween as both its name and trademark, and Halloween was always its biggest night of the year. An irrepressible drag entertainer named Jose Sarria both waited on tables and, weekly, performed his own travesty renditions of operas such as *CARMEN*, and, of course, always presided over Halloween. Sarria was also a pioneer gay activist who injected stinging political commentary into his performances, always enjoined Black Cat audiences to hold hands and sing "God Save Us Nellie Queens" (to the patriotic tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee"), and encouraged men shaken down on "morals charges" to demand jury

trials, in which the lack of evidence would be apparent. He also had the supreme temerity (at least in the view of local authorities) to run for the San Francisco board of supervisors in 1961, garnering a stunning 7,000 votes. Sarria didn't win, but he sent a message—a message that earned him the everlasting enmity of the San Francisco powers-that-were.

In the years after World War II, it was a crime to knowingly, or even unknowingly, sell liquor to a homosexual in California. Even the smallest demonstrations of affection between persons of the same sex could be cause for arrest. Gay bars had to operate with all the precautions and warning systems of speakeasies during Prohibition. As elsewhere in America, bar raids were frequent in San Francisco, but, because of the unusually large gay population in the city, there were all that many more people (gay and straight) to be offended at overzealous vice squads. Gay men and women had gravitated to the city in different waves, and for different reasons. The sexual segregation of military life during the war had led untold numbers of enlisted people to discover, or at least come to terms with, their sexual orientation, and San Francisco was the frequent point of reentry to the civilian world for those who had served in the Pacific theater. The magnetic presence of Beat culture in the fifties attracted thousands eager to pursue the unconventional. San Francisco seemed open-minded and more tolerant





than other American cities—even if its police had ideas of their own.

There was, however, a special exception to the draconian power of the vice squad. "One night a year, like a chapter from a Cinderella story, the police would bestow a free night upon the homosexuals," observed historian Randy Shilts in *The Mayor of Castro Street* (St. Martin's Press, 1982), the biography of assassinated gay city supervisor Harvey Milk. The "free night" was October 31, and the date was only appropriate, wrote Shilts, since "gays did, after all, live most of their lives behind masks."

Halloween is widely celebrated as a gay high holy day, but perhaps nowhere as passionately as in San Francisco, where the historic tensions surrounding the gay community and the authorities gave, and continue to give the proceedings a special, feverish intensity. By the early sixties, the city's heavily Irish Catholic police department, in collusion with the state's Alcohol Beverage Control Commission, had pursued the Black Cat and its habitués with Javertlike zeal for 15 years. Worn down after prolonged cat-and-mouse conflict and the crippling legal bills that ensued, the Black Cat lost the fight, along with its liquor license, on Halloween, 1963. The officials had chosen the day with obvious and sadistic relish.

Two thousand people showed up anyway and celebrated with soft drinks and cider. It was a classic San Francisco Halloween, even without the customary inebriation. According to Jose Sarria's biographer, Michael R. Gorman, "Twelve police officers patrolled in and around the bar. Mink coats and diamonds mixed with T-shirts, leather chaps, and motorcycle boots. There were tourists and students and businessmen, straight couples and gay couples, all gathered to say goodbye to a San Francisco institution."

But for many of the costumed revelers, those who wore the most elegant gowns and glitter, midnight would mark more than just the death of the Black Cat. Like Cinderella's bejeweled carriage, they would all change back into pumpkins—or else. At the stroke of 12 on Halloween, cross-dressing would, once more, become a crime.

In the years before the defiant Stonewall riots of 1968, in which Greenwich Village drag queens violently refused to acquiesce to police harassment, the closet was brutally enforced.

Fortunately, the closet had plenty of costumes.

The outside attention the media bestows upon transvestites at Halloween parades and gay pride celebrations makes a certain, more assimilationist strata of the gay world cringe, but drag queens have always been in the forefront of gay activism, if only because of their intrinsically heightened visibility. In New York, the now-legendary Greenwich Village Halloween Parade, founded in 1973, took on a gay coloration because of its proximity to the West Village's large homosexual population and the concurrent October 31 revels on Christopher Street, New York's prime gay commercial strip. Originally the brainchild of gifted puppeteer and mask-maker Ralph Lee,

who wanted to create a meaningful, mythologically resonant Halloween celebration for his own as well as for neighborhood children, the pageant included dramatically oversized puppets and effigies, and wound through the narrow streets of the Greenwich Village historic district to the initial delight of residents—though later growing pains, traffic disruptions, and rowdiness would sorely tax community support and necessitate a radical change of venue and leadership. An unprecedentedly creative piece of street theater, it won Lee a special Obie Award in 1974. The parade also captured the imagination of the gay population, who became enthusiastic participants in the design, construction, and deployment of the giant puppets, as well as costumed (and often rather uncostumed) participants. As the event's premier chronicler Jack Kugelmass has observed, "Unlike most parades, the Village Halloween Parade makes no claim to respectability. Rather than challenge the city by occupying elite turf and marching up Fifth Avenue—the typical route of ethnic events—the Halloween parade consecrates its own terrain. And unlike other parades, this dramatization of boundaries, in its origins, defined not an ethnic group but a way of life, particularly a Bohemian, artistic, and, frequently, gay way of life."

In San Francisco, where Halloween had traditionally been far more politicized, a distinctly over-the-top drag aesthetic developed, partially in response to archaic laws against posing as a member of the opposite sex. Since travesty drag didn't fool anybody, it couldn't be considered a legitimate attempt at identity fraud. (Jose Sarria famously admonished cross-dressers to always wear a discreet tag stating "I Am a Boy," just to stay legal.) Like country quilts, vintage carousels, customized cars, and Christmas trees, drag evolved into a true folk art, a singular hybrid of handicraft and chutzpah.

A search through the collections of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society of Northern California for artifacts of San Francisco's Halloween history reveals that the holiday pervades all archival categories. Instead of having a file of its own, Halloween is everywhere: in personal pa-

pers and scrapbooks, in photographs, in the donated records and minutes of activist organizations, in advertising and ephemera.

The personal photo albums are especially fascinating, and oddly poignant. One belonged to a lesbian and includes her snapshots of a World War II Halloween party in a women's barracks. The same-sex camaraderie is evident as the women share bottled beer, show off simple costumes, and smile for the camera. A framed portrait of a male military figure has been prankishly overlaid with a ghastly death's head. One of the women has metamorphosed into "Madame La Zonga," a fortune-teller, and sits on the floor in a corner, solemnly divining fates.

Another album is full of color photos, circa 1960, showing a circle of friends proudly displaying their Halloween finery, apparently just before a night on the town. There are several attractive young men, posing in vari-



PAGE 58 TOP: Perhaps the greatest evocation of a classic, old-fashioned Halloween can be found in *MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS* (1944), with Lucille Bremer, Joan Carroll, and Margaret O'Brien. ABOVE: *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE* (1944, with Raymond Massey, Cary Grant, and Peter Lorre) is also set on Halloween



ous degrees of undress as an impressively-winged angel, a silver-skinned Bacchus, and another whose costume consists only of a plumed headdress, a floor-length cape, and something that is not exactly a fig leaf, but which might be more accurately termed a fig piece. The drag queens range from southern plantation belles to demure debutantes to an elaborately realized Elizabeth I (with a strong assist from Bette Davis) whose enveloping raiment of velvet and brocade is more akin to a parade float than a costume. Like many of the creations captured in the snapshots, it probably took weeks to build.

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# Our Man on Baker Street

by David Stuart Davies

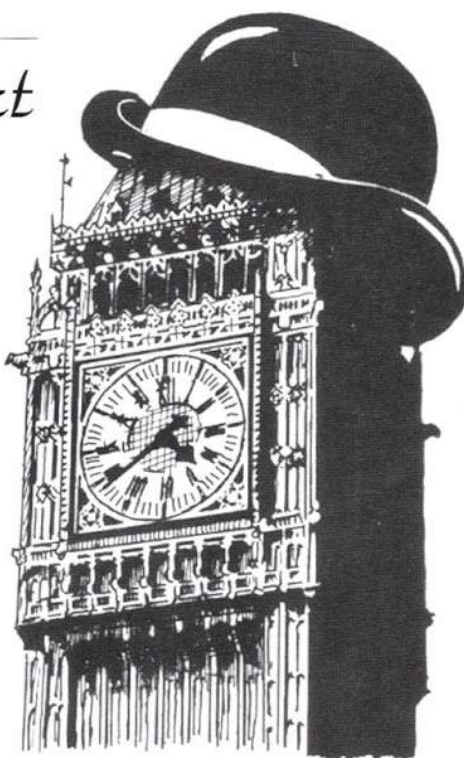
## Sherlock Holmes Goes Batty

When I reviewed the first Matt Frewer Sherlock Holmes television movie, *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (2000), for the magazine *Sherlock*, I wrote: "Some actors just miss the boat playing Holmes and gaze at Rathbone, Brett, Wilmer, and a select few leaning over the ship's rail as the vessel speeds away. Sadly, Matt Frewer never made the pier." Some friends and fellow Sherlockians complained that I was too harsh in my judgment. I am not sure—but what I am certain about is that Frewer's performance through the subsequent movies has improved and matured so that in the fourth and latest offering, *THE CASE OF THE WHITECHAPEL VAMPIRE* (2002), he turns in a controlled and likeable performance. The eccentric verbal mannerisms so irritating in *THE HOUND* are held in check and the preposterous pantomime costume department are only employed in the opening scene. The rest presents Holmes on his way to a Paget lookalike competition.

Indeed, this movie is very unlike the other three (*THE HOUND*, 2001's *THE SIGN OF FOUR*, and 2001's *THE ROYAL*

*SCANDAL*, the last loosely based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1891 short story "A Scandal in Bohemia") in several ways. First of all, the material is pure pastiche, with no reference to any Conan Doyle tale. Indeed, the screenwriter, Rodney Gibbons, even resists the temptation to have Holmes utter the line, "No ghosts need apply," from "The Sussex Vampire" (1924), Conan Doyle's only mild flirtation with the fanged ones in the Holmes Canon.

In truth, there are more echoes of the Basil Rathbone series than anything else in this movie, the plot of which could have been pilfered from a Universal B movie of the forties. Gibbons constructs his scenario on the classic whodunit lines, more Agatha Christie than Conan Doyle. We have a closed environment where murders are taking place. Victims are picked off one by one and it is incumbent upon the detective to find the murderer before they are all wiped out. (See 1945's *THE HOUSE OF FEAR*.) The added frisson is that the murders are supposedly committed by some supernatural fiend, (see 1944's *THE SCARLET CLAW*) a vampire, the living manifesta-



tion of a South American demon. His victims are all discovered with two puncture wounds at the throat. They turn out to be caused—Warning! Solution ahead!—by a garden weeder. (See *THE SCARLET CLAW* again.)

Holmes is called in by Brother Marston (Shawn Lawrence) from the monas-

**BELOW:** Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John H. Watson (Matt Frewer and Kenneth Welsh, in their fourth and, it seems, final outing as the characters) investigate a series of killings in *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE CASE OF THE WHITECHAPEL VAMPIRE* (2002), an original story written and directed by Rodney Gibbons. **PAGE 63:** Is it one of the undead stalking Jack the Ripper's old stamping grounds? Although the killer leaves a bloody message "From Hell," there is no direct reference in the telefilm to Saucy Jack.

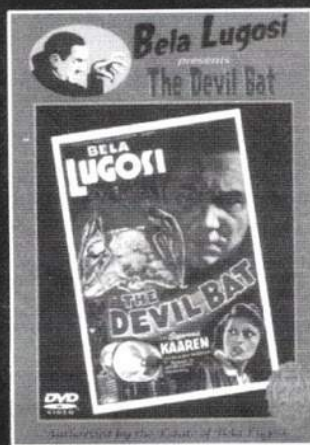
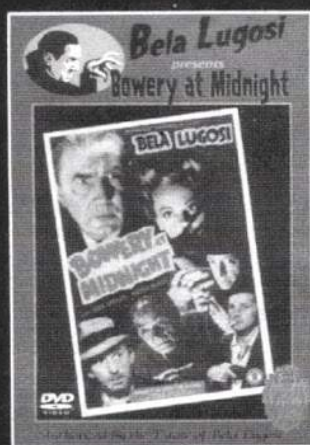






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tery to help find the source of these murders, whether it be human or demonic. (We have to put aside the preposterous notion of a monastery situated in the heart of Whitechapel, one which has a church with valuable artifacts and holds public ceremonies.) The claustrophobic atmosphere of the monastery, with its narrow corridors and lonely, dark places, nicely contributes to the tension and suspense.

The introduction of the supernatural into a Sherlock Holmes story, the ultimate rationalist, gives rise to some fine exchanges, particularly between Holmes and Dr. Watson (the always excellent Kenneth Welsh, who strangely lost his co-billing in this outing) about the nature of belief. When Watson says, "Don't we all hope to find some proof of an afterlife?" Holmes rebuffs the suggestion with, "Don't include me in that 'we.' The great hereafter! I can assure you that there is nothing but the great here and now." Of course, Holmes' belief in the supernatural is challenged for a time during the course of his investigation, but at length he is able to explain the apparently inexplicable in rational terms—even the strange recurring earth movement which shakes the monastery from time to time.

Rodney Gibbons obviously has a feeling for the Holmes stories and he does come up with sparkling dialogue, which Frewer handles very well. In questioning one of the suspects, he proves that they have not been completely honest with him concerning their movements. With his head tilted and eyes narrowed, Holmes proclaims, "Truth is often a flexible concept." Also Gibbon continues the trend of the other films in series, which were scripted by Joe Wisenfeld, of giving Watson some intelligent lines and things to do. You can really see why Holmes is friendly with this medical fellow (although he is far too old), because he has a brain and is useful.

The movie is not without its faults, of course. For example, the whole premise concerning the motive for the murders involving real bats (still not sure about this after three viewings) is tenuous and a bit murky and the terminally irritable Inspector Athelney Jones (Michael Perron) is not only wearing, but such a cliché. Talking of cliché, Gibbons keeps the best to the end, when Holmes substitutes himself for the victim (see THE SCARLET CLAW yet again) in order to catch the murderer red-fanged, as it were!

We are treated to a standard whodunit finale in which Holmes very convincingly, with the use of flashback (in its infancy in 1895), explains how he deduced the iden-

tity of the villain. And this leads me to what I think is a crucial point about this movie: we actually see Sherlock Holmes involved in detective work, a facet often forgotten by the Granada team in their late efforts.

As Holmes/Vampire movies go, this is head and shoulders above Jeremy Brett's 1992 effort THE LAST VAMPIRE (which isn't saying much, I hear you cry) and I enjoyed it. So will you if you approach it in the right frame of mind. Treat it as a grand old B movie. There'll be a Three Stooges short on afterwards. I hope there are more Frewer Holmes movies in the pipeline. I reckon now he's earned a place in steerage.







LEFT: Ricou Browning watches while Bud Westmore puts the finishing touches on the initial design for the Gill Man (face and full figure, and resembling an alien more than an earthbound amphibian), which was rejected. RIGHT: Luke Halpin and his young friends play with FLIPPER (1963). BOTTOM LEFT: Browning suits up as Blackie Lagoon, watched by Jack Arnold and Westmore, among others.

## RICOU BROWNING

Continued from page 37

helped me some. They didn't want to credit the Creature because they wanted people to think it was an actual Creature. SS: It seems pretty naive in this day and age. RB: It doesn't bother me. Today's thinking isn't yesterday's thinking.

SS: The suit itself holds up well, even today. RB: As an example—Bud Westmore was the head of the makeup department at Universal and, when they did a film, he'd be the only one to receive credit. The makeup men who actually did the work didn't get credit. Jack Kevan really did most of it. That's life. It's like with me—most of my work and the money I've made has been directing and second unit directing. Second unit directors are like another toe on your foot. You don't get much credit or appreciation, because you're helping somebody. They

don't want people to know that they're being helped. But they pay you well, so you do it and that's it. SS: Did you consider that, in playing the Creature, you were following in a long line of Universal monsters?

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COMING NEXT ISSUE:  
**FLIPPER**  
AND OTHER SEA CREATURES

## BEN CHAPMAN

Continued from page 39

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CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE...







LEFT: Ricou Browning watches while Bud Westmore puts the finishing touches on the initial design for the Gill Man (face and full figure, and resembling an alien more than an earthbound amphibian), which was rejected. RIGHT: Luke Halpin and his young friends play with FLIPPER (1963). BOTTOM LEFT: Browning suits up as Blackie Lagoon, watched by Jack Arnold and Westmore, among others.

## RICOU BROWNING

*Continued from page 37*

helped me some. They didn't want to credit the Creature because they wanted people to think it was an actual Creature.

**SS:** *It seems pretty naive in this day and age.*

**RB:** It doesn't bother me. Today's thinking isn't yesterday's thinking.

**SS:** *The suit itself holds up well, even today.*

**RB:** As an example—Bud Westmore was the head of the makeup department at Universal and, when they did a film, he'd be the only one to receive credit. The makeup men who actually did the work didn't get credit. Jack Kevan really did most of it. That's life. It's like with me—most of my work and the money I've made has been directing and second unit directing. Second unit directors are like another toe on your foot. You don't get much credit or appreciation, because you're helping somebody. They

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*Continued from page 39*

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**CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE . . .**

**LEFT:** Ben Chapman marvels at Bud Westmore's collection of Creature skins. **CENTER:** Chapman suits up for his role as the Gill Man. **RIGHT:** Westmore helps with the webbed, clawed hands of "The Beastie."





## SCREEN & SCREEN

Continued from page 27

of exploring the DC universe are infinitely greater with JUSTICE LEAGUE, which gathers five additional heroes—Wonder Woman, the Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkgirl, and the Martian Manhunter—to help the Caped Crusader (voiced by Kevin Conroy) and the Man of Steel (George Newbern) fight world-threatening menaces. The DVD release of the inaugural adventure, “Secret Origins,” edits three episodes together to make one hour-length movie.

“Secret Origins” traces the organization of the Justice League (no jingoistic “of America” here, presumably to demonstrate the League’s commitment to fighting evil all over the planet) as it responds to an invasion from Mars. The key figure is J’Onn J’Onzz, the Martian Manhunter, the last true survivor of Mars. (The bad guys come from another planet!) The Manhunter calls on the other costumed adventurers to save Earth from Mars’ fate.

Like the animated BATMAN and SUPERMAN, JUSTICE LEAGUE incorporates elements from earlier incarnations of its legendary characters. For example, the original League’s mascot, Snapper Carr, is here, reimagined as a TV news reporter. The Flash even makes a crack about “Super Friends,” a nod to the seventies animated take on the League.

The seven regular members are the same charter Justice Leaguers from the original sixties comic book, with one exception: Hawkgirl replaces Aquaman in an effort to bring some gender parity to the League. (The Sea King turns up as a guest star in later episodes, however). Acknowledging current DC continuity, young wiseguy Wally West (Michael Rosenbaum) is the Flash, not his late uncle, Barry Allen, as in the sixties comics. This Green Lantern is not Hal Jordan, but his seventies substitute, John Stewart (Phil Lamarr, one of the busiest voices in cartoons today), a black character used to give the League a bit more diversity.

“Secret Origins” is a fun adventure, although I would have preferred a revision of the League’s actual comic book origin to this plot line, which borrows too liberally from WAR OF THE WORLDS (1953) and INDEPENDENCE DAY (1996). The fanboy continuity nut within me balks a little at the use of Stewart; a SUPERMAN episode introduced current funnybook Green Lantern Kyle Rayner into the animated mythos a few years back, so I’m still waiting for this switcheroo to be explained within the series.

The DVD looks and sounds great, although there aren’t many special features on this disc beyond character bios and rather unhelpful cast and crew lists, trailers for other Warners animated videos, and some DVD-Rom features. Overall, JUSTICE LEAGUE is good, but future releases of series episodes should be even better. Let’s have ‘em!

—Jonathan Malcolm Lampley

### JUNGLE GIRL VCI Entertainment \$29.99

As John Baxter noted in *Science Fiction in the Cinema* (1970), serials are the movie equivalent of the comic strips. While this oversimplifies things, the two forms share the requirement of a plot just rich enough to allow for extension yet not so complex that it becomes confusing.

Consider JUNGLE GIRL (1941), in which Nyoka Gordon (Frances Gifford) lives with her father in Darkest Africa along with a tribe of curiously light-skinned natives. Dad (Trevor Bardette) has been made Medicine Man for curing the chief when the Witch Doctor (the irrepressible Frank Lackteen) failed. Dad’s office grants him access to the temple complex located in a cave and to the stor-



age room containing a fortune in diamonds from the tribe’s mine. Hunky aviator Jack Stanton (Tom Neal) brings in Slick Latimer (Gerald Mohr) and Dad’s evil twin brother, who kills the doctor and impersonates him to get his hands on the diamonds. Complicating matters is the Witch Doctor, who naturally wants to regain power over the tribe.

That’s it, and it’s all well in place before the first cliffhanger occurs—which means the remaining 14 chapters are all stratagems and setbacks with plenty of room to work in the renowned Republic fisticuffs and perils. Curiously for a jungle serial, few of the chapter finales involve wild animals, though there is one priceless sequence with Emil van Horn in his wonderfully goofy gorilla suit. The best involves flooding the cave and flushing temple trespassers out through an opening high on a cliff courtesy of the usual great Lydecker brothers trick work. (Alas, none of the hazards do in Tommy Cook, the most insufferable child actor since Donnie Dunagan.)

None of the action puts any acting strain on the actors, who need be little more than cardboard goodies and nasties. Gifford looks fetching in her little leather dress and delivers her lines believably;

Neal looks fetching in his jodhpurs and reads his lines in a palpable imitation of Clark Gable. Bardette gets the plum role of being the good doc, his evil twin, and the evil twin pretending to be the good doc with amnesia. Anything more complex would just get in the way of the action, which barely pauses for breath before dropping Nyoka and/or Jack off cliffs or into burning fire pits or through trapdoors, or placing them under descending spikes or within rooms with encroaching walls, or otherwise threatening them with any number of things guaranteed to cause certain death or extreme pain.

William Witney and John English, who codirected JUNGLE GIRL, turned out Republic’s best serials by keeping things going rapidly enough to prevent reflection on any implausibilities (such as why it takes so damn long for our heroes to figure out that someone who looks like Gerald Mohr and goes by the name of Slick is up to no good). VCI’s transfer comes from a gorgeous British Film Institute print that shows few blemishes; the picture is sharp with a terrific grayscale. Serial buffs will want to get hold of this one. Now, where’s the CAPTAIN MARVEL (1941) DVD?

—Harry H. Long

### THE FLY/ RETURN OF THE FLY 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment \$19.98

THE FLY opens with the murder of scientist Andre Delambre (Al Hedison), his head and arm crushed under a hydraulic press—grisly stuff for a 1958 film. His wife, Helene (Patricia Owens), confesses to the killing, but claims she did it only because it was Andre’s wish. She is also obsessed with finding a particular white-headed fly. Andre’s brother, Francois (Vincent Price), thinks Helene has gone mad, and so does Inspector Charas (Herbert Marshall) when she decides to reveal the entire truth.

Several months earlier, Andre shows Helene his current experiment—a matter transmission device. Helene is awed, but the device still needs work. After losing the family cat in a stream of atoms, Andre spends the next couple of months perfecting the device. Once the transmitter has been tested to his satisfaction, Andre tries it on himself, but a fly enters the chamber and disaster ensues. Andre now has the enlarged head and claw of a fly and the fly has his reduced head and arm! Andre begins to lose his capacity for human thought and must find the fly in order to reverse the mishap. Helene, with the aid of their son, Phillippe (Charles Herbert), and the family maid (Kathleen Freeman), desperately search for the fly, but can they find it in time?

RETURN OF THE FLY (1959) opens roughly 12 years later at Helene’s funeral, where Phillippe (now played by Brett Halsey) implores Francois (Price again) to tell him the full truth about his father’s death. Against Francois’ wishes, Phillippe begins



work on improving his father's device. Francois reluctantly aids in the research in the hope of preventing a repeat of the first ill-fated experiments. Phillippe also



enlists the aid of Alan (David Frankham), a lab technician friend, who's really only interested in stealing the research and selling it for a tidy profit.

Soon they have a working matter transmitter—pretty amazing, since all the original notes and equipment were destroyed at the end of the first film! Alan's shady past quickly causes complications and a resulting fight ends with Alan sending Phillippe through the transmitter accompanied by a fly. The unlikely result is a creature with the same switched body parts as the Andre-fly. Phillippe-fly goes on a rampage and once again the race is on to restore human and fly to their original states.

THE FLY is a taught thriller, with decent characterization. The science is, to say the least, a bit shaky. (For example, both human and fly creatures seem to possess a human mind.) The actors keep the characters interesting, distracting us from the odd lapses in logic. The plot is simple and the flashback structure leads viewers to initially expect a murder mystery. The special effects are serviceable and the fly mask is effective and well constructed, even by today's standards.

RETURN, however, is pure pulp. Color and stereo were dropped, but CinemaScope was retained for this budget-priced sequel. Vincent Price is the only cast holdover, and he and the rest of the cast do what they can with the overloaded script. The special effects are subpar and the fly mask is about three times larger than the first, adding moments of unintentional hilarity. An obligatory romantic interest for Philippe, a scheming assistant, and a rampaging monster add up to a trashy, but mindlessly fun, sequel—though the questionable logic employed here makes the first film seem like a scientific treatise.

This dual-sided DVD offers both films in enhanced 2.35:1 widescreen, with generous chapter stops, English and French audio tracks, and English and Spanish subtitles. Trailers for both films are in-

cluded, as well as trailers for two other Fox Sci-Fi double features. The transfer for THE FLY is a bit soft, but the print is free of specks, with bold color and good stereo sound. RETURN is sharper, with only minor speckling and fine sound. And that's the buzz on THE FLY....

—Ron Morgan

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST The Criterion Collection

\$29.95

What's in a name? Only everything, as the characters in THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST (1952) discover. The film's performances are stage-based—in fact, the movie begins with a couple of audience members arriving at a theater and the curtain rising on this production—but director Anthony Asquith presents them in such expert cinematic terms that there is no distraction. The color transfer is fine. The soundtrack is 2.0 mono. If you have a stereo television, you might do just as well to use that as listen through an alternate source. There is a preview and some biographies of cast and crew with on-the-set photos in color and black-and-white.

Deception abounds as Jack (Michael Redgrave) adopts the name Earnest when he is in the city. Friend Algernon (Michael Denison) is on to his ruse and calls him on it. That very afternoon, Jack plans to ask Gwendolyn (Joan Greenwood) to marry him. She has always been determined to marry a man named Earnest. Algernon journeys to Jack's country house and pretends to Jack's ward, Cecily (Dorothy Tutin), that he is Jack's own brother, named—Earnest.

Oscar Wilde's dialogue still sparkles in the capable mouths of these top-drawer English performers. Especially funny is Edith Evans as Gwendolyn's dominating mother, Lady Bracknell, who can effortlessly add four syllables to the word



"handbag." Also first-rate is Margaret Rutherford as absentminded baby-minder Miss Prism. Her explanation of how she confused a three volume novel with a baby of the male sex is a gem, as is the

bitchy confrontations between Gwendolyn and Cecily when they both think they are engaged to the same Earnest. (In homage, Neil Simon used the girls' Christian names for the cuckoo Pigeon sisters in his comedy THE ODD COUPLE.)

When everyone is on the same wave length, you get a film that is seamless in acting, direction, design, and execution. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST is such a film, and this DVD does it full justice. It's a bit light on the extras for a Criterion release, but it's satisfactory nonetheless.

—Jack R. Earles

#### WAR-GODS OF THE DEEP MGM Entertainment

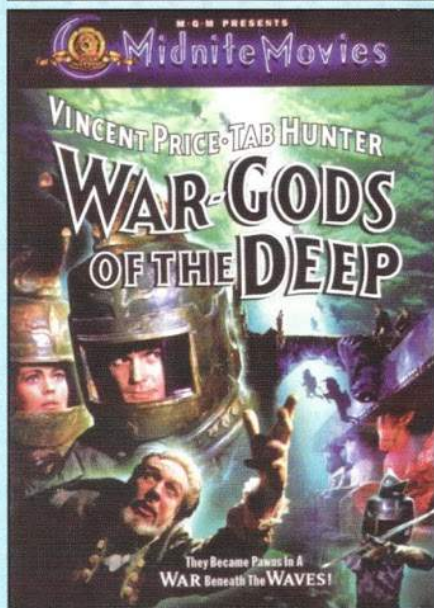
\$14.95

Another AIP Vincent Price film made to cash in on the name of Edgar Allan Poe, WAR-GODS OF THE DEEP (1965) credits the author's 1831 poem "City in the Sea" as its source, but the whole thing plays more like a Jules Verne tale. The intriguing opening has Price reading the Poe verse in voiceover while a corpse is washed up on shore somewhere in England. Since the body in question is a lawyer, there is no need to assume that this was an evil deed. However, American engineer Ben Harris (Tab Hunter) expects foul play and high tails it to the cliffside Tregathan Manor to report the incident.

Shortly after Harris arrives, he's attacked by something resembling the Creature from the Black Lagoon. He's told that items have been stolen from the house, including a sketch of Jill Tregillis (a vacuous Susan Hart) made by the dotty Harold Tiffin-Jones (David Tomlinson). Harold is such a fancier of fowls that he has declared himself Founder of the Roosters Association. Soon, Jill becomes the latest missing item and Ben and Harold take off in pursuit, descending through a secret passage into a whirlpool and down into a subterranean cavern. With Harold's favorite chicken, Herbert, in tow, one can't help but be reminded of Hans (Peter Ronson) and his duck taking a JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (1959) six years earlier. Once the two men arrive in the lost city of Lyonesse, one begins thinking of another Verne-inspired picture, 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA (1954), as they encounter a former smuggler known as The Captain (Price), a disagreeable egotist who wants his visitors to help him stop an underwater volcano from destroying his soggy kingdom.

The first part of the film details the journey to the city, which leads one to believe that something spectacular might happen once our heroes arrive. What we get is a relatively subdued Price (making a late entrance, approximately 25 minutes into the story), some rather impressive sets by Frank White, and two Gill Men who resemble the aforementioned Black Lagoon dweller—only with a severe case of seaweed rash. There's no real dramatic center to the story and the convoluted plotting throws in Jill's resemblance to





the Captain's dead bride, only to leave that thread undeveloped. The movie climaxes with a prolonged escape from the submerged city with everyone wearing diving helmets that make them indistinguishable from one another.

MGM Midnight Video presents the movie in its original widescreen Colorscope format and the print looks good most of the time, although occasional scratches pop up here and there. The sole extra feature is a trailer that gives away a few moments that it shouldn't. The movie, made in England under the title *CITY UNDER THE SEA*, is notable for being the last picture directed by Jacques Tourneur and for proving that, handsome as he was, Tab Hunter could be hard put to deliver a line like "You almost lost your bird!" with much conviction.

—Barry Monush

**STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION—  
Volumes One, Two, Three  
Paramount Home Video  
\$139.99 each**

With the popularity of the original *STAR TREK* growing in syndication, it was inevitable that the series would return in some form. After a brief run as a Saturday morning cartoon, and the big-budget artistic disappointment *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE* (1979), creator Gene Roddenberry temporarily lost control of his creation. Disenchanted by what he saw as the militaristic tone of the movie franchise, Roddenberry returned Starfleet to its Peace Corps roots, and took a leap 80 years further into the future.

The result was *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, which remains the most popular spinoff of the original series. Some elements of the original remained, some were modified, and some concepts jettisoned entirely for this new vision of the future, brought to DVD in attractively designed single-season boxed sets.

Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart), hampered by Roddenberry's new

dictum that the Captain of the Federation flagship should never expose himself to danger, initially looks like a martinet compared to the dynamic James T. Kirk (William Shatner) of the original series. In later seasons, the writers would work around this limitation, and Stewart would finally have the opportunity to bring his own intelligence and charisma to the role. The introduction of the android Data, as the Spocklike outsider, was inspired, and Brent Spiner found the role of a lifetime. Jonathan Frakes, as first officer Will Riker, the ship's designated Lothario, took a few years to relax, and actually look like he belonged on the bridge.

Despite bringing in some of the most promising talent from the original series (such as writers D. C. Fontana and David Gerrold), the first season is nearly a complete washout, with barely a handful of memorable episodes. However, many of the key elements of the following seasons make their debuts here; the Federation is at peace with the Klingon Empire, there are impressive new technologies (like the holodeck) to both benefit and challenge the crew of the Enterprise, and there are new threats. The all-powerful adversary Q (John de Lancie) would become a very popular recurring character; the Ferengi would be relegated to being the comic relief of the universe after their laughable debut. In a holdover from the original series, female crew members sport the trademark Roddenberry-mandated miniskirt. In a blatant move to deflect charges of sexism, in the pilot episode, a male crew member is shown in one of the miniskirted uniforms; perhaps in the future, the skirt will become a unisex item, but in the mid-eighties, it pro-



voked some unintended guffaws. More intentionally humorous, Lwaxana Troi (Majel Barrett), makes her first appearance as the "Auntie Mame" of outer space, and the mother of ship's counselor Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis).

There are a few very good episodes in this first season, including "The Big Goodbye" (an homage to *film noir*) and

"11001001," both of which focus on the holodeck. More often, though, the scripts are just plain bad; in "Justice," Ensign Wesley Crusher (Wil Wheaton) faces a death penalty for stepping on a bed of flowers! And after only a few shows, Lt. Tasha Yar (Denise Crosby) gets killed by an oil slick monster in "Skin of Evil," with a teleplay by Joseph Stefano.

Judging from the first season, without *STAR TREK*'s loyal fan base, the show would've died a quick death. But, with a total change in the writing staff and some changes in the cast (Diana Muldaur's cranky Dr. Pulaski replacing Gates McFadden's more nurturing Dr. Crusher), the show got markedly better in the second season. Two important new recurring enemies made their debuts in Season Two. When Data and Geordi La Forge (Levar Burton) play Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson on the holodeck, they accidentally unleash a computerized Professor Moriarty (Daniel Davis); The Borg, a super aggressive race of bionic zombies, make their debut in "Q Who?," one of the most impressive episodes of the entire series. Another of the series' best hours was "The Measure of a Man," in which Data gets put on trial to prove he's more than a piece of machinery. Of course, there were some clunkers, too. In one episode, Joe Piscopo (in a role originally intended for Jerry Lewis!) tries to teach Data the basic concepts of humor; in another, Will Riker is shown snippets of previous episodes when he gets a high fever. The Enterprise-D's primary mission, that of exploration, began taking a back seat to fending off invading fleets of Romulans, Cardassians, and the Borg. More and more episodes were confined to the Enterprise-D and a few sets, giving the show a rather claustrophobic feel. More than a few detractors began calling the show *SHIP TREK*.

Season Two also featured the unfortunate introduction of Guinan (Whoopi Goldberg), an enigmatic bartender and confessor. Guinan rarely gets involved with any of the onscreen action; instead, she merely acts mysterious, issues vague warnings, and never gives a direct answer. To anything. Contracted to appear only a few times each season, some scripts had to be written twice—once with her character, and once without. At least the miniskirted uniforms were gone, for both female crew members and that one guy in the pilot episode.

In Season Three, the show finally began to come together. Out went Muldaur, and McFadden came back. Intrigues in the Klingon Empire showcased Lt. Worf (Michael Dorn), and Captain Jean-Luc Picard finally managed to get in on some of the action. Season highlights include an episode in which Data constructs an android daughter, Tasha Yar's return from the dead, an hilarious Ferengi episode called "Menage a Troi," and the return of Spock's father, Sarek (Mark Lenard). In the season cliffhanger, perhaps the best

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# THE DEADLY SPAWN RETURNS

## TED A. BOHUS INTERVIEWED BY KEVIN G. SHINNICK

Ted A. Bohus is a man of many accomplishments—actor (1990's *THE AMITYVILLE CURSE*), screenwriter (1994's *REGENERATED MAN*), producer (1993's *METAMORPHOSIS: THE ALIEN FACTOR*), director (1995's *VAMPIRE VIXENS FROM VENUS*), stuntman (1995's *DROID GUNNER*), magazine publisher/editor/associate editor (*SPFX*, *Chiller Theatre*, *Scarlet Street*), and Hawaiian shirt connoisseur. (Wearing one of his favorites, he poses in the photo Top Right with horror host Zacherley.) Like many creative people, though, Ted Bohus holds a special place in his heart for his firstborn—or, in Ted's case, his firstspawn.

In 1982, Bohus wrote, produced, and appeared in *THE DEADLY SPAWN*, an independent sci-fi thriller that has since achieved cult status. The movie is due for DVD release from Don May's Synapse Films, in a sparkling new, deluxe edition. According to advance reports, spawns have never looked better.

"*THE DEADLY SPAWN* only cost about \$20,000 to make," Bohus remembers, "and Don May is spending about the same on the DVD. We spent some money doing additional special effects for the film—effects that I wish I could have done at the time, but we didn't have the money. So as it turns out, this DVD will cost as much as the movie cost in 1982.

"I'd been trying to get *THE DEADLY SPAWN* released on DVD for a while, but couldn't find a good print or negative. I finally found the original A and B roll negative. It's a very costly process to conform it and make another print, but Don May thought it was important enough to do. We're recutting the film and it's going to look just like new."

Like many sci-fi and horror buffs, Bohus began making amateur films as a teenager. "Like a lot of people, I started out working with Super 8 films and then got into 16mm. I never went to film school; making an entire feature is the best education you can get. I worked in Baltimore on a couple of low-budget pictures with Don Dohler and finally said to John Dods, who did the effects work, 'Why don't we make our own science fiction film right here in New Jersey?' Our first picture was *THE DEADLY SPAWN* and we were very lucky; we actually got bids for it to go theatrical."

Some fans of *THE DEADLY SPAWN* are surprised to learn that it had a theatrical release, many bigger-budgeted films having gone directly to video. "When the film was almost finished, I took it to Alexander Beck for foreign distribution. He supplied another \$5,000 for completion money in exchange for the foreign rights. I screened it around and got some offers. Paramount okayed it in New York, but when they sent it to California, they said it was a little too rough to be a Paramount release. Troma wanted it, but I finally decided to go with 21st Century. They struck about 70 prints and released it first in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and then they moved it around the country. Finally, those prints were even sent overseas. They covered the country and a lot of the world, those 70 prints.

"Today, there are more markets. You not only have VHS, but you have DVD, which is a gigantic market and almost equal to VHS. Germany, Japan, France, England, Australia, China, Korea—all these markets have really opened up to DVD and VHS in the past five years."

The poster used to advertise *THE DEADLY SPAWN* has become a highly-collectible item, thanks to the high-profile artist responsible for it. "Tim Hildebrandt, the artist who created the Tolkien Calendars and the *STAR WARS* and *CLASH OF THE TITANS* posters, painted the one-sheet poster [pictured Bottom Right, with Hildebrandt and Bohus] for the film. We shot at Tim's house, and used him and his son in the movie. A number of people on *THE DEADLY SPAWN* have gone on to other things in the film industry. John Dods now works for Disney. Dan Taylor works at ILM. Vincent Guastini has gone on to do effects for *LAST OF THE MOHICANS* and *SUPER MARIO BROTHERS*."

Bohus' initial post-*SPAWN* project was originally slated to be a direct followup. "I had offers to do a number of low-budget sci-fi films in 16mm, but I wanted to move on to 35mm. My next film was *METAMORPHOSIS: THE ALIEN FACTOR*. It was supposed to be called *DEADLY SPAWN 2: THE TRANSFORMATION*, and then *DEADLY SPAWN 2: METAMORPHOSIS*, and then *METAMORPHOSIS*. At a certain point, when the budget grew to be over \$1 million, the distributors decided to divorce it from the very low-budget *DEADLY SPAWN*—but, really, it's supposed to be a sequel."

According to Bohus, the new DVD is going to shoot the works in all departments. Not only will there be a fresh transfer of the film, but the extras will be extensive, including a blooper reel, theatrical trailers, collectors cards of *Spawn* creatures drawn by famous artists, a 15-panel comic strip by German artist Markus Metzler that shows how the aliens came to Earth, and dozens of rare, behind-the-scenes production photos.

"Of course, I recorded a commentary," Bohus confesses, "and the guy recording it had to hold a pillow over his mouth because he said it was the funniest commentary he'd ever heard."

*Continued on  
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LEFT: Julie Adams costarred with Richard Egan in *BRIGHT VICTORY* (1951), *HOLLYWOOD STORY* (1951), and *SLAUGHTER ON TENTH AVENUE* (1957). CENTER: The Gill Man (Ben Chapman) menaces Adams and Richard Carlson, paying little heed to the crew member in the background. RIGHT: Adams and Chapman have remained friends since filming *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1954). PAGE 71: The original Gill Man design.

## JULIE ADAMS

Continued from page 34

wormy Baby Ruths." (Laughs) He had a wonderful sense of humor.

SS: Another cast member in *BEND OF THE RIVER* was Lori Nelson, who starred in a *Gill Man* film of her own.

JA: Oh, yes, I loved Lori! She was delightful! When they opened *BEND OF THE RIVER*, Rock Hudson and Lori and I were sent to do publicity in the Northwest. We traveled all around for two weeks and got to be great friends at that time. The girls of the Creature!

SS: Rock's movie image was vastly different from his true offscreen persona. Was it well-known among the other actors that Hudson was gay?

JA: No, it was not. Rock kept his life separate. We did fan magazine layouts together—going bowling or something—and we were always great friends. When we went on tour to publicize movies and he would be in a city before me, he'd leave little jokes and notes. He had a great sense of humor. I never heard any gossip. It was a simpler time. We were, I guess, naive. It had to be very difficult to live two lives.

SS: You were directed by Raoul Walsh in *THE LAWLESS BREED*. He was another notorious Hollywood tough guy.

JA: Most of these tough guys were tough with other guys. They were usually wonderful with the actresses, and he was, too. He was funny, very funny. One day, we were doing a scene at the bar. One of the extras had a great beard, and he was puffing on his cigar and had a great plume of smoke around him. Raoul yelled, "Cut! Cut! His mufi is on fire!" (Laughs) He was like Anthony Mann—real men's men, but very nice to the ladies.

SS: In 1953, you worked opposite Tyrone Power in *THE MISSISSIPPI GAMBLER*.

JA: Tyrone Power was the perfect image of an old-time movie star, so handsome, gracious, and charming. They have a little ceremony every year for Tyrone Power at

the Hollywood Cemetery. Last year, I spoke first—I guess it was alphabetical order—and then Betsy Palmer said how nervous she was, making her first movie with him, and that he'd called her over for a talk. It put her at ease. There was great warmth in every story told about him. Of course, the man was so handsome that when he smiled it was like somebody turned the klieg lights on! One day he said, "You know, I'm not sure that you should be playing my love interest. We look like brother and sister." I thought that was the greatest compliment anybody had ever paid me!

SS: Wasn't your initial screen test really for Universal really for All-American Detroit Lion football player Leon Hart? Weren't you just called to act opposite him?

JA: It was his screen test. I had read two or three times at Universal for the talent department. Sophie Rosenstein was the head of the department—a very nice woman, but they never gave me my own screen test. She was friendly with my agent, and told him, "We're doing this screen test with Leon Hart. Bring Betty in, and instead of it all being on him, we'll turn the camera so we have some shots of her as well." My agent got Bob Buckner and Mark Robson to look at that piece of film for *BRIGHT VICTORY*. I got the part, which led to my contract.

SS: And the next thing you know, you were starring in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*!

JA: Actually, I have an affection for it, because it's a movie that so many people love. We are in the entertainment business, and it's entertained so many people. I accept it; it's just fine. A few years ago, I attended a Cinéfantastique festival in Spain near Barcelona. I spoke before the film and then I was ready to leave, but my friend Barbara, who I brought with me, said, "Oh, I want to see the picture. I've never seen it." So we stayed, and I realized what a good picture it is! It works—and when a movie works, that's it.

SS: It's very well made, isn't it?

JA: I realized what a good job Jack Arnold and everybody connected with the movie had done. It didn't look like a flat B movie; it had a really lovely atmosphere and the actors were interesting. The Creature itself was very well made. Even though it was very much of its time, it's amazing how much mail I get from young people today about this film! With all the sophisticated special effects today—it's interesting that this picture has endured.

SS: The movie's producer William Alland, claimed in recent years that the movie was in fact his vision, and that Arnold brought little to the movie himself.

JA: There was no one else directing. There was a second unit that did the underwater filming in Silver Springs, Florida—that was separate, of course—but there was no doubt that Jack was the director. I saw William Alland around and about, but certainly everything we did on the set was directed by Jack. Whether William Alland worked behind the scenes, I don't know—but from my point of view, Jack was our director.

SS: One of the film's most famous scenes is the underwater ballet between your character and the Gill Man. Ginger Stanley was your double in the underwater scenes, with Ricou Browning as the Creature. Is it safe to say that this sequence is more Ginger than Julia, or were any underwater shots taken of you?

JA: No, none. That was all that lovely young woman who doubled me. I have a friend who watched it on TV not long ago—a friend who is in the business and should know better—and he said to me, "Gee, I didn't know you could swim like that!" (Laughs) I filmed my scenes on the back lot, and the water was not that clear. They filmed it in Florida, and it was a beautiful sequence. We all saw the dailies and loved it. We saw how difficult it was, too, because later in the film Ricou had to do that very deep dive with her. Scotty Welbourne was the underwater cameraman. It's a great sequence.

SS: What was your initial reaction to being assigned *CREATURE*?

JA: Well... I think I'd have been happier with a dramatic role. (Laughs) But I never thought of turning it down, because the studio had been very good to me. And I was a contract player, so I thought, "Well, I guess we'll have some fun."

SS: And was it fun?

JA: It was lots of fun! We laughed a lot. We called the Creature itself Beastie. "Good morning, Beastie!" There were a few goofy moments, too. We had this wonderful old vaudevillian who worked the clap board. Well, for the scene where Whit Bissell has been mauled by the Creature and his face is all bloody, this vaudevillian went in with the board and said, "How ya fixed for blades?" (Laughs)

SS: It took awhile to come up with the right design for the Creature, didn't it?

JA: They originally made the Creature a different way and then they had to remake the suit. The day that they tested the first suit in the tank at Universal, I said, "Let me try the aqualung." So, I went down and swam around in the tank and thought, "This is so great!" When they closed the picture down for the redesign, Ricou Browning and Scotty Welbourne said, "Well, we could take these tanks and go to Catalina so you could swim in the ocean"—so that's what we did! I learned to dive and use the aqualung, which was relatively new at that time. They didn't even have compressed air at Catalina, then; we just lugged these tanks over. I read *The Silent World* by Cousteau and learned to swim under the sea. I loved it. Of course, I was swimming with two guys who made sure I didn't drown!

SS: What did you think when you saw the final Creature design for the first time?

JA: I was really very impressed. It was quite wonderful. The work of Bud Westmore and Jack Kevan—what they came up with in the lab—wow! (Laughs) I sort of stepped back in awe—until I got used to seeing it every day. And then Ben Chapman being well over six-foot-tall—it was most impressive!

SS: Your "Creature career" only lasted approximately eight weeks in total, and yet we're still talking about this movie. You're still being pursued by the Creature.

## LORI NELSON

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LN: He was very difficult. Cruel, really. During one scene, I actually broke down in tears over the way he was treating me and ran to my dressing room. I refused to come back to the set. They didn't know what to do, so they called my mother and she told them to call Rock Hudson! (Laughs) And they did! Rock came to my dressing room and told me I had to go back to the set and stand up to Douglas Sirk. He said, "Tell him you won't put up with this treatment, and that if he doesn't behave in a civil manner you'll leave the set again and never come back." Well, I did it, and Rock was right—I never had any more trouble on the rest of the film.

SS: Your *BEND OF THE RIVER* costar, Julie Adams, starred in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, and then you starred in the sequel, *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.

JA: That's right; you can't escape it, so you might just as well enjoy it. The movie is just a part of my career, and it's one of those ironies that makes you giggle—it's telling you not to take yourself too seriously. I mean, it was a lark to make the movie, and I really enjoyed everyone on the picture. We were pals through it all, even the cold times when the tank wasn't heated in November. After you've lived awhile, you realize it's all part of the whole spectrum. If it's the part that is the quote—"most famous," that's okay, but I know the whole spectrum, so it doesn't really matter. As I say, we're in the entertainment business, and if this picture has entertained and enchanted these many people, obviously we must have done something right.

SS: The studio rarely missed an opportunity to promote their stars, often having them photographed in all sorts of settings.

JA: There's a really goofy one where I'm wrapped up like a Christmas gift! They'd dream up this stuff for Christmas or Thanksgiving or whatever. Nothing was in bad taste—we did cheesecake shots, but they're mild compared to what's done now. I was just happy to be under contract and happy to be working. It was all part of this adventure that my life has been. All in all, for someone who came from Arkansas with 15 cents, I've had a very interesting life in the arts.

SS: The cheesecake reached its zenith with *CREATURE*, when they outfitted you in that famous white swimsuit.

JA: It is so funny! It's the only time I've ever had a custom-made bathing suit. They made it in wardrobe, several of them, but the white bathing suit became famous because of all the stills! Other than that, I wore shorts or pedal-pushers, whatever we called them back then. It's those stills that made the white bathing suit famous. It was somewhat racy for its day, because it was cut a little high, but it seems so tame, now.

SS: Did you see the finished film when it was originally released, or were you on to other projects?

JA: I'd go to screenings, but after that I'd never like to see them very much any-

more. That's why I hadn't seen the picture in years when my friend wanted to see it in Spain. They were like something of the past, and I always wished I'd done something differently, so why keep looking at them? It's not something I do.

SS: There's a scene in *CREATURE* with Kay smoking a cigarette on the boat and casually tossing the butt overboard. Many revisionists consider this a pro-environmental message.

JA: I think that sequence was in the script—and because I don't smoke, I thought, "Well, I hope I don't look like a jerk doing this." Nonsmoking actors usually look pretty foolish when they're smoking. But nobody ever thought that being in the middle of the jungle and putting one cigarette in the water would change the environment too much!

SS: Did making *CREATURE* in 3-D make for additional problems during the filming?

JA: I don't know that we gave it a lot of thought. They were trying so many different elements at that time to pull people away from the TV set. That was the big threat. It was a time of CinemaScope and widescreen, and 3-D was another way to pull people into the movies. We also did *WINGS OF THE HAWK* in 3-D.

SS: There were a few mishaps during the filming, particularly when the Gill Man carries Kay deep into his lair. Given Ben's limited visual range, he accidentally introduced your head to the wall of the cave. Ben said you were a trouper about it.

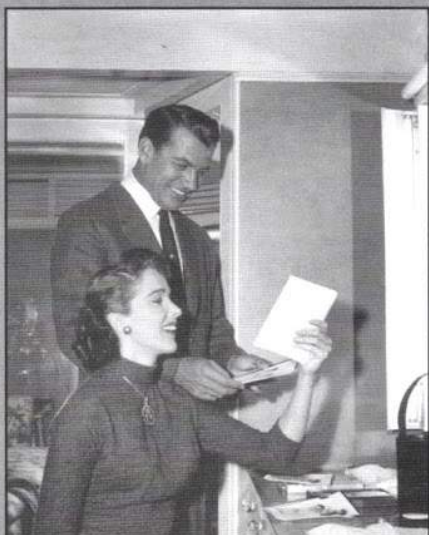
JA: That was the day that they'd forgotten to heat the tank! It was freezing cold—Ben at least had his suit on!—and he was carrying me. Of course, he was sopping wet and his vision was straight-ahead, so we bumped into one of the paper-mâché rocks and I skinned my head. I wouldn't call it a major mishap, but it was sweet that he said I was such a trouper. (Laughs) He's a darling guy. Ben and I recently got together—we hadn't seen each other in so many years—to sign a new poster of *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. It was great to see him. Ben was so cute—he said, "You know, we were the youngest people on that movie," and I said, "Ben, that's why we're still here!"



The bizarre mutant (Paul Blaisdell) in *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED* (1956) wasn't as scary as the director of *ALL I DESIRE* (1953)—Douglas Sirk.

Continued on page 81





LEFT: Julie Adams costarred with Richard Egan in *BRIGHT VICTORY* (1951), *HOLLYWOOD STORY* (1951), and *SLAUGHTER ON TENTH AVENUE* (1957). CENTER: The Gill Man (Ben Chapman) menaces Adams and Richard Carlson, paying little heed to the crew member in the background. RIGHT: Adams and Chapman have remained friends since filming *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1954). PAGE 71: The original Gill Man design.

## JULIE ADAMS

*Continued from page 34*

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**JA:** It was his screen test. I had read two or three times at Universal for the talent department. Sophie Rosenstein was the head of the department—a very nice woman, but they never gave me my own screen test. She was friendly with my agent, and told him, "We're doing this screen test with Leon Hart. Bring Betty in, and instead of it all being on him, we'll turn the camera so we have some shots of her as well." My agent got Bob Buckner and Mark Robson to look at that piece of film for *BRIGHT VICTORY*. I got the part, which led to my contract.

**SS:** And the next thing you know, you were starring in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*!

**JA:** Actually, I have an affection for it, because it's a movie that so many people love. We are in the entertainment business, and it's entertained so many people. I accept it; it's just fine. A few years ago, I attended a Cinemafantastique festival in Spain near Barcelona. I spoke before the film and then I was ready to leave, but my friend Barbara, who I brought with me, said, "Oh, I want to see the picture. I've never seen it." So we stayed, and I realized what a good picture it is! It works—and when a movie works, that's it.

**SS:** It's very well made, isn't it?

**JA:** I realized what a good job Jack Arnold and everybody connected with the movie had done. It didn't look like a flat B movie; it had a really lovely atmosphere and the actors were interesting. The Creature itself was very well made. Even though it was very much of its time, it's amazing how much mail I get from young people today about this film! With all the sophisticated special effects today—it's interesting that this picture has endured.

**SS:** The movie's producer, William Alland, claimed in recent years that the movie was in fact his vision, and that Arnold brought little to the movie himself.

**JA:** There was no one else directing. There was a second unit that did the underwater filming in Silver Springs, Florida—that was separate, of course—but there was no doubt that Jack was the director. I saw William Alland around and about, but certainly everything we did on the set was directed by Jack. Whether William Alland worked behind the scenes, I don't know—but from my point of view, Jack was our director.

**SS:** One of the film's most famous scenes is the underwater ballet between your character and the Gill Man. Ginger Stanley was your double in the underwater scenes, with Ricou Browning as the Creature. Is it safe to say that this sequence is more Ginger than Julia, or were any underwater shots taken of you?

**JA:** No, none. That was all that lovely young woman who doubled me. I have a friend who watched it on TV not long ago—a friend who is in the business and should know better—and he said to me, "Gee, I didn't know you could swim like that!" (Laughs) I filmed my scenes on the back lot, and the water was not that clear. They filmed it in Florida, and it was a beautiful sequence. We all saw the dailies and loved it. We saw how difficult it was, too, because later in the film Ricou had to do that very deep dive with her. Scotty Welbourne was the underwater cameraman. It's a great sequence.

**SS:** What was your initial reaction to being assigned *CREATURE*?



JA: Well... I think I'd have been happier with a dramatic role. (Laughs) But I never thought of turning it down, because the studio had been very good to me. And I was a contract player, so I thought, "Well, I guess we'll have some fun."

SS: And was it fun?

JA: It was lots of fun! We laughed a lot. We called the Creature itself Beastie. "Good morning, Beastie!" There were a few goofy moments, too. We had this wonderful old vaudevillian who worked the clap board. Well, for the scene where Whit Bissell has been mauled by the Creature and his face is all bloody, this vaudevillian went in with the board and said, "How ya fixed for blades?" (Laughs) SS: It took awhile to come up with the right design for the Creature, didn't it?

JA: They originally made the Creature a different way and then they had to remake the suit. The day that they tested the first suit in the tank at Universal, I said, "Let me try the aqualung." So, I went down and swam around in the tank and thought, "This is so great!" When they closed the picture down for the redesign, Ricou Browning and Scotty Welbourne said, "Well, we could take these tanks and go to Catalina so you could swim in the ocean"—so that's what we did! I learned to dive and use the aqualung, which was relatively new at that time. They didn't even have compressed air at Catalina, then; we just lugged these tanks over. I read *The Silent World* by Cousteau and learned to swim under the sea. I loved it. Of course, I was swimming with two guys who made sure I didn't drown!

SS: What did you think when you saw the final Creature design for the first time?

JA: I was really very impressed. It was quite wonderful. The work of Bud Westmore and Jack Kevan—what they came up with in the lab—wow! (Laughs) I sort of stepped back in awe—until I got used to seeing it every day. And then Ben Chapman being well over six-feet-tall—it was most impressive!

SS: Your "Creature career" only lasted approximately eight weeks in total, and yet we're still talking about this movie. You're still being pursued by the Creature.

JA: That's right; you can't escape it, so you might just as well enjoy it. The movie is just a part of my career, and it's one of those ironies that makes you giggle—it's telling you not to take yourself too seriously. I mean, it was a lark to make the movie, and I really enjoyed everyone on the picture. We were pals through it all, even the cold times when the tank wasn't heated in November. After you've lived awhile, you realize it's all part of the whole spectrum. If it's the part that is the—quote—"most famous," that's okay, but I know the whole spectrum, so it doesn't really matter. As I say, we're in the entertainment business, and if this picture has entertained and enchanted these many people, obviously we must have done something right.

SS: The studio rarely missed an opportunity to promote their stars, often having them photographed in all sorts of settings.

JA: There's a really goofy one where I'm wrapped up like a Christmas gift! They'd dream up this stuff for Christmas or Thanksgiving or whatever. Nothing was in bad taste—we did cheesecake shots, but they're mild compared to what's done now. I was just happy to be under contract and happy to be working. It was all part of this adventure that my life has been. All in all, for someone who came from Arkansas with 15 cents, I've had a very interesting life in the arts.

SS: The cheesecake reached its zenith with CREATURE, when they outfitted you in that famous white swimsuit.

JA: It is so funny! It's the only time I've ever had a custom-made bathing suit. They made it in wardrobe, several of them, but the white bathing suit became famous because of all the stills! Other than that, I wore shorts or pedal-pushers, whatever we called them back then. It's those stills that made the white bathing suit famous. It was somewhat racy for its day, because it was cut a little high, but it seems so tame, now.

SS: Did you see the finished film when it was originally released, or were you on to other projects?

JA: I'd go to screenings, but after that I'd never like to see them very much any-

more. That's why I hadn't seen the picture in years when my friend wanted to see it in Spain. They were like something of the past, and I always wished I'd done something differently, so why keep looking at them? It's not something I do.

SS: There's a scene in CREATURE with Kay smoking a cigarette on the boat and casually tossing the butt overboard. Many revisionists consider this a pro-environmental message.

JA: I think that sequence was in the script—and because I don't smoke, I thought, "Well, I hope I don't look like a jerk doing this." Nonsmoking actors usually look pretty foolish when they're smoking. But nobody ever thought that being in the middle of the jungle and putting one cigarette in the water would change the environment too much!

SS: Did making CREATURE in 3-D make for additional problems during the filming?

JA: I don't know that we gave it a lot of thought. They were trying so many different elements at that time to pull people away from the TV set. That was the big threat. It was a time of CinemaScope and widescreen, and 3-D was another way to pull people into the movies. We also did WINGS OF THE HAWK in 3-D.

SS: There were a few mishaps during the filming, particularly when the Gill Man carries Kay deep into his lair. Given Ben's limited visual range, he accidentally introduced your head to the wall of the cave. Ben said you were a trouper about it.

JA: That was the day that they'd forgotten to heat the tank! It was freezing cold—Ben at least had his suit on!—and he was carrying me. Of course, he was sopping wet and his vision was straight-ahead, so we bumped into one of the paper-mâché rocks and I skinned my head. I wouldn't call it a major mishap, but it was sweet that he said I was such a trouper. (Laughs) He's a darling guy. Ben and I recently got together—we hadn't seen each other in so many years—to sign a new poster of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. It was great to see him. Ben was so cute—he said, "You know, we were the youngest people on that movie," and I said, "Ben, that's why we're still here!"

## LORI NELSON

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LN: He was very difficult. Cruel, really. During one scene, I actually broke down in tears over the way he was treating me and ran to my dressing room. I refused to come back to the set. They didn't know what to do, so they called my mother and she told them to call Rock Hudson! (Laughs) And they did! Rock came to my dressing room and told me I had to go back to the set and stand up to Douglas Sirk. He said, "Tell him you won't put up with this treatment, and that if he doesn't behave in a civil manner you'll leave the set again and never come back." Well, I did it, and Rock was right—I never had any more trouble on the rest of the film.

SS: Your BEND OF THE RIVER costar, Julie Adams, starred in CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, and then you starred in the sequel, REVENGE OF THE CREATURE.

LN: Most of my movies at Universal were made before REVENGE OF THE CREATURE. My contract was coming up for renewal and I didn't want to be there any longer. When you're under contract, they dictate what you do. They tell you what movies they want you to be in and you pretty much have to do them. I'd done a lot of movies there, but I wanted to get on with my career. I wanted to branch out and free-lance and up my salary. I also wanted to do television, and in those days television was the evil step-sister. They didn't want you to do it, especially if you were under contract. So, I wanted to leave.

SS: Was REVENGE OF THE CREATURE also a factor?

LN: I really didn't want to do science fiction. It was a comedown in those days to do science fiction—that, or you

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The bizarre mutant (Paul Blaisdell) in THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED (1956) wasn't as scary as the director of ALL I DESIRE (1953)—Douglas Sirk.





## THE CREATURE TRILOGY

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The fans may not have liked it, but it certainly excites Barton, whose whole agenda seems to be to turn everything into him, more or less. He's also consumed by insane jealousy over Marcia, a sure sign of serious ego insecurity. "Don't ever try to leave me, don't ever try to make a fool of me," he warns her. Poisoned by the green-eyed monster (not the green monster) over the attention his trophy wife receives, Barton's blossoming madness is nicely realized at the cocktail party he throws to celebrate the Creature's big evolutionary leap. In the below-deck lounge, amid a sea of liquor and cigarettes, Marcia, in an alluring cocktail dress, serves drinks to the men. Barton sits on the couch, befuddled not just by the booze, but by a potent mix of jealousy and pride over both his wife's allure and the Creature's "progress." A few of the scientists in attendance are tired, a little drunk, and want to go to bed, but Barton tries to belittle them into staying up. He boasts that their metabolisms aren't up to his, and jokes that, perhaps, if they can alter the Creature's metabolism, maybe they can save lives by altering people into better drunk drivers. He gets a few laughs, but Marcia barely forces a smile, and Barton basically stabs himself with her lack of laughter. "It's not that bad, for me, Marcia," he says. Everyone soon leaves and he ends up pathetically trying to woo her, then accusing her of being a tramp. It's a well-rendered portrait of a



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Barton eventually stumbles off to bed alone, and the next scene shows Marcia waking up on the couch to Grant's latest advance. He's been coming on to her all through the movie, but she's ignored him. Now he forces himself on her and she resists. The Creature, in the other room, hears the struggle, and reacting to all violence with violence, breaks free and breaks up their clench. The now Gill-less Man dives into the sea and, in the final underwater scene of the trilogy, sinks down into the depths, his newfound lungs filling with water. Once you've "advanced" there's no going back, and this he finds out the hard way. Tom grabs an air tube and leaps into the water to save him.

With the Creature rescued, the final act of the trilogy begins. A truck pulls up to Barton's sheep ranch, and a couple of hands stand nearby with shotguns. The back door is lowered and the Creature walks down the loading ramp slowly, head up. The scene seems right out of some recent urban gangster films, with the animal resembling a Ving Rhames-type ghetto kingpin in what looks like prison gear. He is put in with the sheep (symbol of meekness and compliance) and seems to be in a drugged stupor. From his pen, he can look out at the edge of a nearby lake—and that's what he spends his imprisonment doing, looking out and trying to remember, his mouth continually agape. Watching him from the shadowed deck of the bungalows is Tom, seeking to understand the Creature, perhaps trying to "remember" him in a similar way to the Creature trying to remember the sea. Barton, who now suspects Tom is after his wife, sees Tom seeing the creature seeing the sea. Barton is civilization gone awry, blaming external circumstances for his own internal lack of peace.

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guitar; the Creature hears her and becomes entranced. This mirrors the classic swimming sequence in the original, when the Gill Man gazed for the first time at Kay shining over him like an angel. Here he's on land, and Marcia is above him, in the "sky" of the second floor of the bungalows, serenading him with heavenly music. The Creature has moved one flight up, but so has the angel. (It's a testament to the superb monster mask that it conveys a nice stretch of implied emotions without any real elasticity of expression. With the mouth slightly agape, the Creature seems stuck in a state of dreamy befuddlement, as if forever on the verge of remembering something.)

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Back in the bungalows, there is the first-ever epilogue in the series. The remaining scientists gather to discuss the fate of their experiment. "The beast remains a beast," one of them says. But Tom sees it differently: "We're close to the jungle and the stars," he says. Our ability to approach even closer hinges on "what we're willing to understand about ourselves." In trying to deny his own animal nature and lack of control over it, Barton surrendered totally to madness. Marcia, meanwhile, has been inspired by the events to get on a train and go "straighten her life out." There follows a police report that the Creature was last seen heading to the ocean. Marcia is going on a train, and the Creature is

going to the sea; both are effectively going back into the inescapable past. We see the Creature on the beach, gazing out over the waves, his monstrous face framed by the ocean horizon. It's odd and sad, a totally unique, haunting moment in monster movies. There's something in the image that expresses all our incurable longing for whatever we never had enough of as children, and which no amount of anything can ever satisfy. The Creature staggers past the camera towards the waves right before the end credits, but we don't actually see him sink to his "death" as in the past two films. It isn't necessary—we know that the water which once healed his wounds and cradled him back to health is now destined to destroy him. Once one has attained a certain degree of wisdom, the return to unawareness is impossible, even ridiculous, like Adam vainly trying to piece the remains of Eve's half-eaten apple back together.

There would be no further Creature films, though there would be many imitations, and there have been several remakes announced over the years. A script was in the works to be directed by John Carpenter, which would have utilized the environmental angle, with the female lead a Greenpeace activist (or a tree-spiker, depending on the stage of the script development). Recently, Gary Ross announced that he and dad Arthur were working on a remake. If so, one can safely assume that environmental issues will be updated to reflect our current global state, a state which validates many of the worries that were part of the fifties mindset. Concerns about run-amok science have come true. The "enemy is us" notion has become a given. A recent study has been released focusing on the global implications of the "Asian brown cloud," a stretch of man-made smog miles thick that hangs over the entire Indian subcontinent and which will undoubtedly cause millions of deaths in years to come. Environmental concerns are the key issue of our time, with the UN taking an active role in trying to bring about global standards for ecological preservation. With both Gary and Arthur Ross working on the script and the film, this new Creature could prove interesting both as a modern version of the story and a mirror of the past's vision of the future come true. A pet project of Jack Arnold's that never saw the light was a Ross script called A CIRCLE OF WHEELS. In Arnold's words (in an interview with David J. Schow), the script was about how "a husband and wife become involved in big business to the point where they begin to act like machines, and they literally turn into machines—they begin to grow wheels and cogs." Today our society is spinning man out of control; though man might not have cogs in his stomach, he certainly has ulcers, and addictions, and no one who understands him—least of all himself—in a world of technology run amok.

For children of the fifties now grown to maturity, following the Gill Man in movie theaters over his three-year life span mirrored their own passage into maturity. In the first passage, the Creature is found in his element, the Black Lagoon, and pulled out. Looking up from the amniotic oceans at the beautiful mother swimming above him, the Creature is lured to the light, and his symbolic death (and rebirth). REVENGE OF THE CREATURE follows as infantile frustration and wish fulfillment, with the Creature taken from his la-







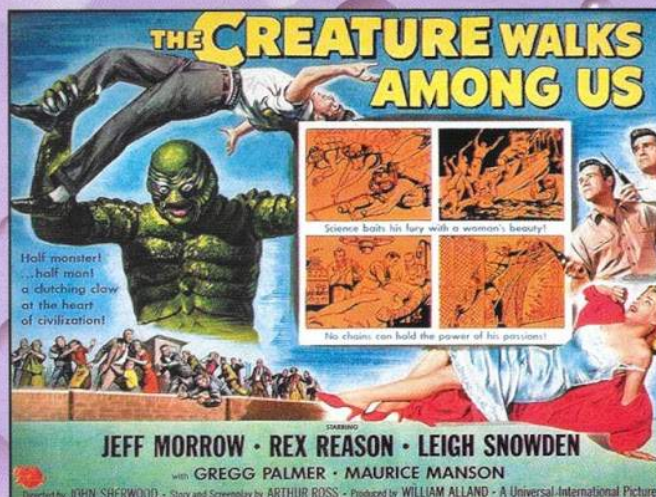
## THE CREATURE TRILOGY

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"Maybe it's too late to leave it, for some people," Marcia says; like a true *film noir* heroine, her past is too corrupted to harbor any real hope for reform. (Similarly, the Creature's past is too much a part of him to transcend with any success, making him also a perfect *noir* antihero.) Nonetheless, inspired by this dialogue, Marcia goes swimming, and the Creature watches. Grant also watches, and joins her for a dip in the water, against her wishes. The Creature sees him and gets a chance to express his anger when a mountain lion sneaks into the cage and attacks one of the sheep. He kills the interloper with his bare hands. Everyone gathers at the sound of the violence, and Barton initially thinks that the Creature has reverted to its savage ways, but Tom points out that he was simply defending himself. Barton takes this concept to heart when he sees Grant and Marcia appear at the scene in dripping swim clothes. He reasons that it may be acceptable for him, too, to kill to defend himself—or at any rate, to defend his honor.

In the next scene, Barton enters Grant's room and orders him off the ranch. As they walk down the stairs, he murders Grant, and hits on a plan to put the body in the sheep pen and pin the crime on the watchful Creature. He turns off the electricity on the pen fence and quickly brings the body of Grant inside. What he doesn't realize is that the Creature, having seen him commit violence, is now thrown into a homicidal rage. Before Barton can get the juice turned back on, the Creature rips the gate apart and comes after him up the bungalow steps. In the film's most impressive scenes, the Creature tears through the bungalows after Barton, tossing furniture aside, smashing through doors with ease, and raising more hell in a minute or two than he did in the entire rest of the trilogy. The Creature finds Marcia and Tom hiding behind a curtain, but leaves them alone. It is Barton he wants and he catches him trying to run down the stairs, hurling him off the balcony to his death. On his way out of the compound, the Creature is shot by one of the ranch hands—but only wounded, he escapes.

Back in the bungalows, there is the first-ever epilogue in the series. The remaining scientists gather to discuss the fate of their experiment. "The beast remains a beast," one of them says. But Tom sees it differently: "We're close to the jungle and the stars," he says. Our ability to approach even closer hinges on "what we're willing to understand about ourselves." In trying to deny his own animal nature and lack of control over it, Barton surrendered totally to madness. Marcia, meanwhile, has been inspired by the events to get on a train and go "straighten her life out." There follows a police report that the Creature was last seen heading to the ocean. Marcia is going on a train, and the Creature is

going to the sea; both are effectively going back into the inescapable past. We see the Creature on the beach, gazing out over the waves, his monstrous face framed by the ocean horizon. It's odd and sad, a totally unique, haunting moment in monster movies. There's something in the image that expresses all our incurable longing for whatever we never had enough of as children, and which no amount of anything can ever satisfy. The Creature staggers past the camera towards the waves right before the end credits, but we don't actually see him sink to his "death" as in the past two films. It isn't necessary—we know that the water which once healed his wounds and cradled him back to health is now destined to destroy him. Once one has attained a certain degree of wisdom, the return to unawareness is impossible, even ridiculous, like Adam vainly trying to piece the remains of Eve's half-eaten apple back together.

There would be no further Creature films, though there would be many imitations, and there have been several remakes announced over the years. A script was in the works to be directed by John Carpenter, which would have utilized the environmental angle, with the female lead a Greenpeace activist (or a tree-spiker, depending on the stage of the script development). Recently, Gary Ross announced that he and dad Arthur were working on a remake. If so, one can safely assume that environmental issues will be updated to reflect our current global state, a state which validates many of the worries that were part of the fifties mindset. Concerns about run-amok science have come true. The "enemy is us" notion has become a given. A recent study has been released focusing on the global implications of the "Asian brown cloud," a stretch of man-made smog miles thick that hangs over the entire Indian subcontinent and which will undoubtedly cause millions of deaths in years to come. Environmental concerns are the key issue of our time, with the UN taking an active role in trying to bring about global standards for ecological preservation. With both Gary and Arthur Ross working on the script and the film, this new Creature could prove interesting both as a modern version of the story and a mirror of the past's vision of the future come true. A pet project of Jack Arnold's that never saw the light was a Ross script called *A CIRCLE OF WHEELS*. In Arnold's words (in an interview with David J. Schow), the script was about how "a husband and wife become involved in big business to the point where they begin to act like machines, and they literally turn into machines—they begin to grow wheels and cogs." Today our society is spinning man out of control, though man might not have cogs in his stomach, he certainly has ulcers, and addictions, and no one who understands him—least of all himself—in a world of technology run amok.

For children of the fifties now grown to maturity, following the Gill Man in movie theaters over his three-year life span mirrored their own passage into maturity. In the first passage, the Creature is found in his element, the Black Lagoon, and pulled out. Looking up from the amniotic oceans at the beautiful mother swimming above him, the Creature is lured to the light, and his symbolic death (and rebirth). *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* follows as infantile frustration and wish fulfillment, with the Creature taken from his la-





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goon to be chained, poked, and "taught" valuable lessons. (Shades of a child's first days of elementary school!) He also experiences oedipal jealousy, as his beloved goes off with the very man who subjects him to discipline. Finally, in the third installment, he is captured yet again, and this time badly burned (by fire, just as his youthful audience was ravaged by acne and hormones). He is left even more human (or mature), yet miserable, alienated, and lonesome. He looks to the sea with the same forlorn longing that a half-grown, awkward, shambling teenager might look to a stuffed animal from his infancy, or an aging hipster to the days he was in a college band, or a dying Charles Foster Kane might call for "Rosebud." For scientists—so in denial of human capabilities—this sort of wild, untamed infancy must seem like a threat in and of itself. Conversely, for natural man, science is a threat, more than willing to destroy that which it can't quantify, validating that which is only intellect, and discrediting the "soul." This soul is symbolically destroyed through our treatment of the natural environment, of which it is a mirror image. Meanwhile, fields such as artificial intelligence are considered the future, and logic and analytical thought is everything because science can duplicate it. The soul, or life force, or "consciousness" of nature is considered unimportant, because man cannot measure and probe it. Those engaged in meditation practices are always facing the "wall" of their own ego, the eternal conflict between it and the rest of consciousness. The ego is always trying to convince itself that it is the entire



person, and that it's ceaseless thinking is the essence of the world. Such egos can kill their hosts, and indeed are happy to do so rather than relinquish control. Take this inner battle to a wider perspective, and we see it carried out on Planet Earth—man as the ego of the world, destroying everything alive in an effort to convince itself only the measurable has value.

Our collective fear of the natural world is as old as man himself, as "stupid as the caveman" who shuddered at unexplained noises at night. How strange that we are now caretakers of the planet; we who have slowly wiped out every strange noise are now being expected to put them back. Stranger still is the fact that the last unexplored stretch of land on Earth is the Creature from the Black Lagoon's own Brazilian rain forest, which is also the nexus of environmental concern. Though it is being destroyed by acres and acres every day, there's still much about it that remains hostile, mysterious, and foreboding. There could still be a Gill Man in there somewhere, swimming ever deeper into the center of the unknown. In the Creature trilogy, we see this great dichotomy reflected as if it were a mirror on our own global unconscious. As we turn the mysterious and strange into a wasteland of ash and grass to feed the masses, we need to realize what's really driving us, the deeper motivation beneath the economic politics. Man in his never-ending quest to label, quantify, and understand is actually destroying everything he touches. In trying to unravel the mystery of nature, he unravels himself, finds nothing he can "solve," and he hates it. He hates to realize that the jungle and the stars are the same self he's been running from all his life. Until he honors this self, he's lost. He is starving for McDonalds in the Garden of Eden. He is blasting rotenone into his own face and staggering down the street of evolution like a stoned tourist, robbing everything he touches of its holy power.



## Next Issue: Lugosi, Lorre, and Columbia Horrors!



## TED A. BOHUS

Continued from page 69

Currently working on the hip-hop music film *DESTINATION FAME*, Bohus intends to return to his sci-fi roots with a project titled *THE VISITOR*. A frequent guest at horror cons, he advises young filmmakers "to go for it, because now is the time! You can make a film on high-definition video and find buyers, whereas before you couldn't sell them. They're being shown on cable. You can transfer an entire 90-minute movie for \$50,000, so you're saving \$150,000 in stock, developing, printing, and transferring. It's the best time for low-budget filmmakers to really get out there and get their stuff sold and shown."

Bohus chuckles wickedly at the thought of unleashing scores of crazed filmmakers on the world. Talk about *Deadly Spawn*!

## DAVID DRAKE

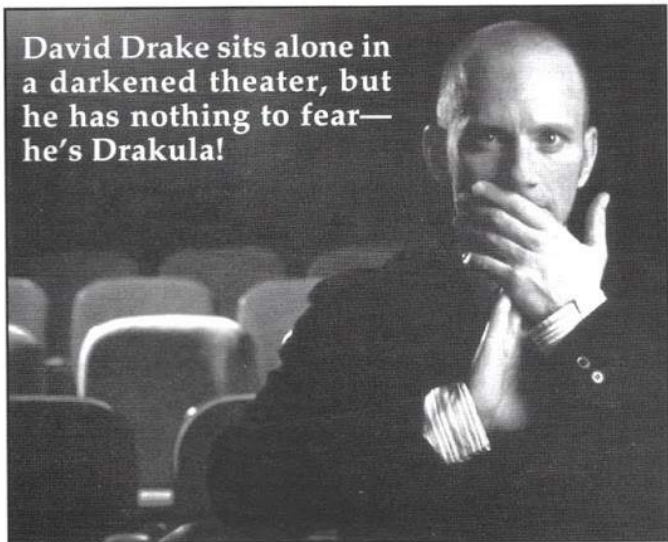
Continued from page 23

Undead. In the eighties, he replaced actor/playwright Charles Busch in Busch's long-running *VAMPIRE LESBIANS OF SODOM*. "That's right," Drake laughs, "a genuine Drakula appeared in *VAMPIRE LESBIANS OF SODOM*! When I told Charles Busch, he said, 'Oh, my gosh! We have to use this as a press release! You should go by that name professionally!' I could have, too, because I got my Equity card doing that show."

Being both a Drakula and an out actor, Drake harbors strong opinions about equating gay culture with vampires. "There's a history of sexual subversion and vampires. There's Lefanu's *Carmilla*, which was the basis for *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*. Jonathan Harker's fear of Dracula is a sexual fear, which he describes as 'the terror I dare not think of.' There's a long history of homosexuality in vampire literature; it's this dangerous sexuality that will steal away with your children, your wife, your husband. It's a subconscious fear in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. There's certainly been speculation about Stoker's sexuality. Anne Rice just picked up this gay subtext and modernized it, that's all. She gave it a new set of clothing. Vampires can go either way, because blood is blood whatever the gender."

Proud of his name, David also clings to "Drake." "I've carried it so long, and I keep it as a stage name. I also do it for my mother. I was a teenager when she was killed in a car accident, and I continued with the name because it was her name, it was our name. I'm an only child. At the time, I kept the name without fully understanding the bond it represented. If I let go of it, I let go of her; she would just disappear. So I'm David Drake, aka Drakula."

David Drake sits alone in a darkened theater, but he has nothing to fear—he's Drakula!



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## TOM HENNESY

*Continued from page 55*

my agent arranged a test, but on the day I was supposed to test Natalie and Sal had to go to Baldwin Hills, which was near the ocean and some distance away from the studio. They had to shoot there for a week. I was stuck—I couldn't get away from the teaching thing. They tested Walker, but they didn't like him. He had no experience and he wasn't athletic. He was a big guy—he used to lift weights—but that was about it. Of course, his way of speech was good, because he talked slow and southernlike. That was the character, more or less, of Cheyenne Bodie. The sponsors put the screws to Jack Warner and said that, if he didn't come up with somebody quickly, they'd go elsewhere with the series. So they took a chance with Walker, but they made sure that I was in their pocket to do his fights and horse work. I made more money under my contract than Walker did—I think he made \$150 a week and I made \$300, plus adjustments for my stunt work.

**SS:** Before signing with Warner Bros., had you basically been a freelancer?

**TH:** I'd worked for all the studios. I was offered prior work as a stock player. Clint Walker had originally been signed to a contract at Paramount and was dropped after six months; he ended up working as a night guard at the back gate at Warners. That's a story I could tell you—it involved an agent named Henry Wilson. He had hardly any women clients, but he had a lot of male actors. The guy was—what do you call it now?—gay. He was a gay guy. He tried to get me to come into his group; he said he'd get me a contract like he did Clint Walker and Tab Hunter and Guy Madison and Rory Calhoun and guys like that.

**SS:** Stories are legion of women being propositioned by male

studio reps, but how often did male-on-male secret dealings go down?

**TH:** A hell of a lot! All the studios had casting officials, and they had their favorites. I knew a lot of people who got nailed on that. I knew Rock Hudson. I used to double him. I doubled him in three pictures, one with Jeff Chandler—in fact, I doubled both of them—and I got to know Rock pretty well. Of course, I knew what he was like. You wouldn't know it unless he confided in you or thought that you might join in with him, but I got to know him pretty well. He never confided that in me, though, no.

**SS:** How had you attracted Henry Wilson's attention?

**TH:** I was working on *THE CAINE MUTINY*. The picture was filmed in Hawaii, the location stuff. I had to have my hair dyed red to double Van Johnson, and I also doubled Robert Francis. They were grooming him to be a big star at Columbia, but he died in a plane crash. Anyway, Van Johnson played Steve Maryk, Executive Officer U.S.S. Caine, who was just under Philip Francis Queeg, Captain U.S.S. Caine, played by Humphrey Bogart. In the story, Maryk dove into the Pacific to attach a towline to a target. I had to do that stunt, and there were a hell of a lot of sharks around—Tiger Sharks, mainly. They used to stick with the ship, because we'd dump garbage every time we left Pearl Harbor. The stunt was really a hazardous thing. I was like a piece of meat! While I did it, they had gunners mates shooting at the damn sharks! When I'd gone far enough, they had half a dozen sailors pull me in. It was like dragging a gigantic bait lure! I could hear the damn gun shots every time I came up to the surface!

**SS:** You weren't just a stunt man; you were fish food!

**TH:** Afterwards, Van Johnson came up, put his arm around me, and told me what a hell of a job I'd done. He said I really made him look good, that sort of stuff. And he said he wanted me to have dinner with him that night. Well, I knew about Van Johnson. I don't know how many people knew it outside the industry, but he was gay. So I said I had a date that night, which I did. He told me to look him up when we got back to town—which I never did. (Laughs) It so happened that Johnson ran across Clint Walker and his wife and daughter in Las Vegas. Walker had a job as a Casino guard. They dressed the guards like Mounties and so he had a costume on, and he met Van Johnson. Well, Johnson hit on him and said that he ought to be in pictures. He told Walker that if he ever got to Hollywood to look him up. Hell—Walker quit and went right to Hollywood! Johnson introduced him to Henry Wilson, and Wilson got him a stock contract at Paramount. All he did was hold a spear in *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*, I think.



Two's company and three's a crowd—especially in this case! Tom Hennesy butts in on Lori Nelson and John Agar.

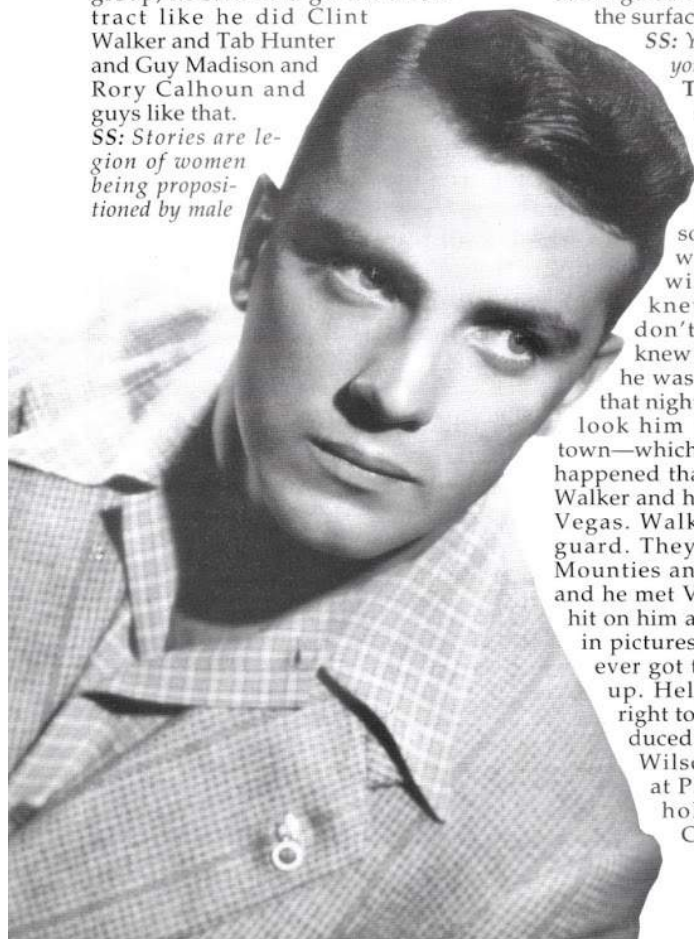
**SS:** That's quite a sensational account.

**TH:** Walker didn't know anything about horses and was very clumsy and awkward. He couldn't fight and I specialized in fights, so it worked out pretty good. He used to come up to my house. I lived in a suburb of Hollywood called Shadow Hills. I had several horses, and he used to practice mounting and dismounting, stuff like that. He got a motor scooter, a little motor scooter from Italy, and practiced on that. I had Harleys, so he tried to learn how to ride a motorcycle and damn near killed himself! That was the end of that! (Laughs)

**SS:** You don't seem very fond of Clint Walker.

**TH:** Well, by that time, I had a beautiful French wife. She was a singer—had an operatic voice—and an actress. Her name was Giselle D'Arc. Anyway, Walker had a nice wife and daughter, although he was alienated from the daughter. He was a very strict disciplinarian. Several years later, he and his wife divorced and she became one of those—what the hell are they?—Tupperware women. She used to try to get Giselle to have a Tupperware party, but Giselle wasn't interested. We'd moved to Malibu by that time. There was a Russian actress who lived in the area. She was trying to promote a picture package based on the life of her mother, who was a big star in Russia. Walker met the woman and she said, "I'll have you play the male lead and Giselle will play my mother." I got bored with going to their meetings and rehearsals, so Giselle and Walker spent a lot of time together. Walker was attracted to Giselle, but it didn't bother me; I didn't feel threatened. The next thing I knew, Giselle said, "Why don't we have a trial separation?" I said, "If you want a separation, why not just get a divorce?" And she said, "Well, you said it, not me." So I filed for divorce and she married Walker. That's what I've got against him, and why I told you how he got in the business through Henry Wilson and Van Johnson.

**SS:** Had you seen the first film, *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, when you





were cast as the Gill Man in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*?

**TH:** I hadn't seen the original. Of course, I knew about it; I just hadn't seen it. I'd done a lot of Western work at Universal, and they contacted me through the casting office and asked if I'd be interested. I met William Alland, the producer. He was a strange little guy, but he was okay, I guess. Then I met Jack Arnold and they offered me the part. I had a swimming background and they figured I'd do both the underwater and topside stuff. They realized finally that it wasn't logical, so they hired another guy, John Lamb. They made a suit for him, and he and I both worked out in a tank on the lot, where we practiced hose-breathing. It's a hell of a hard thing to do; it's really tough. Some people are better at it than others—like Ginger Stanley, the girl who doubled Lori Nelson on *REVENGE*, and Ricou Browning, who had a lot of experience with it.

**SS:** Were you excited about landing the role?

**TH:** No, because I had to go through a lot of rigmarole building the suit and adjusting how it fit and felt. I knew it was going to be a bear. I wasn't sure how much swimming I was going to have to do, though John Lamb was being trained and was doing a good job.

**SS:** Why was Lamb released from the picture?

**TH:** That was a pitiful thing. The first day down in Florida, they filmed the scene where they unload the Creature from a flatbed truck. It was a hell of a dangerous thing! Then they did this shot where he's in a net; he's been overcome by the attendants and is being transferred from the receiving tank to the observation tank. They decided that John Lamb would do that shot. They had me—they were always tighter than hell, the way they pinched pennies—they had me play an attendant, so I had on scuba gear and trunks. Anyway, after an hour of filming, Jack Arnold abruptly said, "Cut! This isn't working! The Creature looks like a God-damn man in a suit! We can't use this!" They had a big conference, and they had Ricou Browning's Creature suit right there. It was completely different from the new suits; it was a different color and different material, but they were ready to go with it. Arnold said, "Suit up, Browning!" It turned out that one of the other attendants was Ricou Browning!

**SS:** And John Lamb was out?

**TH:** He only worked once—that first attempt—and they sent him home. He had a long stint, anyway, because he'd been at the studio testing the suit and hose-breathing. He probably had six weeks, which was pretty good because he wasn't a stunt man or an actor at the time. From then on, though, it was Ricou in the water and me doing the land stuff.

**SS:** Would you have liked to have done it all?

**TH:** It wouldn't have been reasonable, because it was just too damn tough. It was hell to be in that suit! Topside it wasn't bad in California, but in Florida it was unbelievably miserable. It wasn't a job for one person.

**SS:** How would you compare the stunt work of today to the stunt work when you were in the business?

**TH:** It's definitely different these days. They've organized. They have a guild. I didn't join that—I could have been a charter member, but I didn't socialize with those guys and that was kind of a necessary thing. That's how a lot of them got work. They used the same answering service and had the same agents. I didn't do that. Back when I was doing that stuff, they didn't give credit to stunt people. They didn't want the public to know that their stars were being doubled. They kept it anonymous. When I played the Creature in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, they didn't give me a screen credit. They wanted the public to think that there really was a Creature! Can you imagine that reasoning? (Laughs) Nowadays, everything is out in the open. Hell, stunt people have their own awards shows and get mentioned constantly in the columns. They form close associations with one guy—they'll get involved with someone like Van Johnson and stay with them the rest of their career.

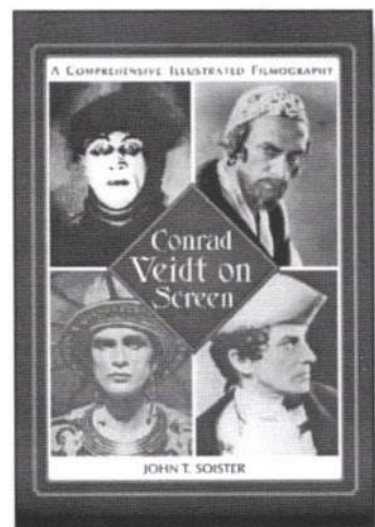
**SS:** Weren't you friends with another Gill Man—Ben Chapman—back then?

**TH:** Ben claims that he knew me years ago, when I lived in Malibu and he was a friend of some neighbors. I used to surf with these guys. I don't have any recollection of ever having met him, but he tells everyone we're old friends—which is fine with me. It's better to have that than animosity. (Laughs) Ben charges for his autographed pictures. I've never charged anybody for anything, but I'm going to start! He said I'm crazy not to; he goes to all these shows that they have for fans and goes all over the country. They bring him over from Hawaii, first class! He sits at a table selling this stuff and they're happy to have him. He gets to know a lot of people.

**SS:** Are you familiar with Ben's argument that the actors who played the Gill Man should only sign photos of themselves in the Creature suit?

**TH:** I've had pictures sent for me to sign that Ricou Browning had signed, and they weren't pictures of him—they were pictures of me! Ben told me that Ricou was signing pictures of Ben regularly and that Ben didn't do it; he didn't see why the hell anybody else should do that. I think Ricou should be a little more aware of what he's signing. Maybe he didn't give it any thought at the time, but he certainly knew he didn't work in any topside stuff in either picture, and most of the stills were of that nature. I hope he isn't still doing it. I don't think that he'd do it now, but who knows? I don't see that stuff, so I don't know. But I've had several people tell me that he'd signed pictures of me, and they were trying to get the word out to collectors that they were no good; they weren't authentic. They wanted collectors to throw them away, but I don't think anybody is going to do that! (Laughs)

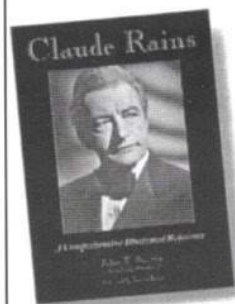
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## THE DEVIL ON CASTRO STREET

Continued from page 61

rated from paraders by intimidating barricades. As Lee told *The New York Times*, "In its early years, the parade had a wonderful spontaneity between onlookers and marchers, and there was no separation between the two. But the number of onlookers began to overwhelm the participants, and that's what killed it for me."

In both New York and San Francisco, it was clear that the next October 31 celebration would not be conducted as usual. Direction of the New York parade was assumed by Jeanne Fleming, an experienced event producer with a large estate in Dutchess County far better suited for the construction of large-scale, television-friendly floats and props than Lee's studio at the Westbeth artists' housing project in the Village. On October 18, 1986 CUAV issued an open letter on the subject of Halloween.

"For five years, CUAV staff and volunteers have been in the streets Halloween night, taking on an increasingly dangerous physical risk in order to help protect members of our community. What we have seen, however, is not a decrease in Halloween hostilities but an intensification of the danger. Last year, CUAV monitors helped confiscate over 100 weapons, including knives, bats, live guns, and machetes. We have been the eyes and ears of the Police, assuming the very real risk of serious bodily injury or worse. This year, the Board and staff of CUAV have decided we can no longer risk the escalating danger of a highly visible street presence on Halloween and we are therefore changing our role."

For the first time, a liaison agreement with the San Francisco Police Department would pair volunteer monitors with patrolmen. The "onus of confronting assailants and confiscating weapons will be on the Police this year—not us," the letter explained. The number of volunteers was reduced, and it was agreed that no volunteer would work independently of a police officer partner. Additionally, photographer teams were posted in both the Polk and Castro neighborhoods. The street-level photographers would operate covertly, identifying bashers or potential attackers. Highly visible telephoto teams in second story windows and on rooftops were meant to be frankly intimidating. Volunteer observer-assistance teams, including attorneys, were enlisted to simply document events. Medical units were expanded, and walkie-talkies were linked to an emergency CB radio network. Finally, CUAV chair Carl MacMillin just urged people to stay away. "We encourage people to attend private gatherings or the many organized events in the city on Halloween," he said in a press release. "Although the overwhelming majority of people, straight and gay, come out on Halloween to enjoy the celebration as good neighbors, the crowded conditions and the actions of a violent few can make these areas dangerous and very unpleasant."

By 1990, the annual crowds trying to squeeze into a few short blocks on Castro Street had grown bigger than ever, an estimated 250,000 people jamming the upper Market Street area. The usual headaches were ameliorated somewhat by the presence of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of clownish transvestites in nun's habits, whose outrageous street theater and media savvy had proved an effective tool for fund-raising and community works. (The Sisters are also, without doubt, the only non-profit charity to ever be listed on an official list of papal heretics, due to their eyebrow-raising antics during the Pope's visit to San Francisco in 1987.) In cooperation with CUAV, the Sisters erected an outdoor stage, and, for the first time, provided some focused entertainment, while proclaiming the need for gays and lesbians to "take back" Halloween. According to Sisters member Ken Bunch, "More than 80% of the people who come out are straight people who come to gawk at the queers." This year, 15 blocks were cordoned off by police, instead of the usual four. At each

barricade entrance, donations were solicited for AIDS agencies and activist organizations.

But Castro Street wasn't the only large-scale Halloween event that evening. The yearly spectacle had also drawn the excited interest of Texas televangelist Larry Lea, a protégé of Oral Roberts, and his San Jose associate Richard Bernal. The ministers both saw the chance for a high-profile evangelical counter-event. As Bernal told the *Wall Street Journal*, San Francisco was a city "where it's easier to get a condom than it is to get a Bible," and that a full-scale exorcism was in order. "We're not talking about street-level demons here. These are high-ranking evil spirits."

Conjuring the image of the Devil himself prowling Castro Street worked like a charm in capturing media attention, and Lea's plans to bring 10,000 "Prayer Warriors" to the Civic Center Auditorium made headlines. *The San Francisco Chronicle* described the trademark style of Lea's "Prayer Breakthrough" gatherings: "Amid fervent praying, military rhetoric, and 'speaking in tongues,' believers attempt to conquer Satanic princes and specific 'territorial spirits' holding sway over various metropolitan areas."

In 1990, the gay community had already suffered eight years of AIDS devastation and regular scapegoating by conservatives and Christians. Larry Lea was simply not welcome in San Francisco, and especially not on Halloween. An ad hoc group called GHOST—Grand Homosexual Outrage at Sickening Televangelist—was formed by members of the activist organization Queer Nation, who recruited gays, Wiccans, and pro-choice groups to demonstrate. Six-thousand five-hundred Prayer Warriors actually showed up. "Police in riot helmets stood behind steel barricades that separated the arriving worshippers from several hundred protestors determined to vent their anger reported the *San Francisco Examiner*. "Lea's followers were showered first with chants and slogans, and later with eggs and fruit. The protestors began with creative chants such as 'The people, perverted, will never be converted,' and 'Bring back the lions,' but those soon deteriorated into shouted obscenities."

The media salivated, but those working on the street-level frontlines of Halloween were convinced that basic changes were in order. The following summer, CUAV program coordinator Jill Tregor informed her board of directors that "most gay men and lesbians found the whole thing so frightening and unpleasant that they stayed away from their own neighborhood and therefore did not take part in a celebration that was started within the community." The basic problem, wrote Tregor, was that Halloween on Castro Street was an event that "occurs to some extent spontaneously, meaning that no one sponsors the event or takes any responsibility for it." Amazingly, no street permits had ever been authorized for Halloween; instead, "the streets were closed on a so-called 'emergency' basis." Volunteers "probably prevented even more violence from occurring, but did nothing to actually bring focus or real control to the event."

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence felt a certain, testy sense of ownership, given their innovations of the previous year, and a reported \$15,000 in one-dollar donations. CUAV gingerly negotiated with the city, the Sisters, and another group that had taken the initiative to actually obtain a city permit for Halloween 1991. The city accepted insurance liability, and CUAV produced the event. Violence dropped, and fund-raising soared to \$35,000. Meanwhile, Evangelist Larry Lea returned to the city he called "a graveyard of preachers and churches" for another prayer storm, this time at Candlestick Park baseball stadium—about as far from Castro Street as one can get and still be in San Francisco. A highlight of the show was the appearance of one of the previous year's pagan protestors, who had converted to Christianity after "intense discussions" with Richard Bernal.

Protests against the perceived Halloween interloper cooled considerably that year, but elsewhere around the country, evangelicals began finding innovative ways to make hay from the holiday.



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In Dennis, Massachusetts, many visitors to the "Haunted House on Hell Street," were upset when the usual monsters, strobe lights, and fog machines quickly gave way to a series of grisly moral lessons. A coffin creaked open to reveal a blood-soaked young man who must witness his own funeral, his death the result of drunk driving. A bloody murder victim pulled the switch on his killer's electric chair. And finally, the visitors were ushered into hell itself, where, as the *Boston Globe* described the scene, "a young woman writhes on a hospital gurney yelling, 'Where is my baby?' An attending physician hands her what appears to be a small, blood-covered object—presumably an aborted fetus—and says, 'Here, you knew what you were doing when you had the abortion.' Then a teenage girl steps forward and says, 'I would have been that child.'"

The haunted house was sponsored by the Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church, and immediately raised the ire of the abortion rights organizations Mass Choice and the Cape Cod Women's Agenda. A Mass Choice representative told the press, "Our objection principally is that this is being billed as family entertainment and it clearly is not. There is no way to know what you will see when you enter is graphic and grisly and is proselytizing for a particular point of view. In particular, it equates criminal acts—like drunk driving and murder—with abortion, which is not illegal." The sponsoring church offered no apologies.

Just as garden-variety haunted houses were widely imitated by fund-raising organizations in the 1970s, fundamentalist "hell houses" caught on as Halloween events (or, anti-Halloween events) for the 1990s. One of the most controversial was a 1995 version in Arvada, Colorado, sponsored by the Abundant Life Christian Center. In addition to the obligatory abortion and drunk driving skits, this one also included a satanic human sacrifice, and the funeral of an AIDS patient presented as a warning against homosexuality. Animal entrails in a bloody dish were employed to simulate

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a mangled fetus. The Colorado Council of Churches registered a formal protest, noting that "We have several denominations that oppose abortion and homosexuality, but none of them use these kind of tactics. This reeks of aggression, violence, and hatred that could traumatize youth rather than teaching them understanding and love." A more spontaneous protest was mounted by graffiti artists, who spray painted slogans such as "Jesus Died for His Sins—Not Mine" on the church. Julian Rush, director of the Colorado AIDS Project and a United Methodist minister, accused the church of "catering to the lowest levels of voyeurism, and blaming victims for the sorrows and tragedies of the world." Publicity for Hell House was overwhelming, and Abundant Life marketed a 280-page manual with a production kit (cost: \$149) for other churches eager to get into the brimstone business.

In Lilburn, Georgia, the same Halloween, the First Baptist Church's Judgment House allowed that a teenage girl with AIDS could indeed go to heaven, as long as she contracted the disease from a blood transfusion and not from sex. But her boyfriend, who killed himself from grief, went directly to hell. Electric heaters were used to make damnation feel all the more real. The attraction drew 4,300 visitors. One mother told the *Atlanta Constitution* of her 14-year-old daughter's distress upon returning from Judgment House. "I think the depiction of hell was her deepest concern. She was worried. She was confused." In the family's own, Presbyterian tradition, she said, "God is loving, trusting, compassionate, forgiving, and she saw this side [of Christianity] where she thought if you didn't do absolutely everything right you would burn in hell."

In Stockbridge, Georgia, beginning in Halloween 1992, a far more elaborate vision of hell, "Tribulation Trail," was presented outdoors on a mile and a half-long woodland path. By 1997, according to the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, the event employed over 300 members of the Metro



Heights Baptist Church as actors, set builders, concession vendors, and traffic controllers. Attendance was estimated at 20,000. "No cute baby-faced devils with quilted red costumes for these amateur actors," religion writer Gayle White reported. "These are dark demons from the depths of hell, dragging away those who flunk the test at the magnificent Great White Throne of Judgment." The extravaganza also included dramatic depictions of the Antichrist and the Rapture, and a counseling tent at the end of the trail provided information for people interested in conversion.

Not every church-sponsored Halloween haunt involves evangelizing, and many are very similar to the walk-through mazes sponsored by other nonprofit agencies. However, a certain level of cognitive, cultural, and spiritual dissonance can result when ghouls and goblins invade sacred space. "A madman in the pulpit at the first United Methodist Church in Oak Park?" asked *Chicago Tribune* religion writer Michael Hirsley, observing the trend in 1993. "Worms and 'bloody finger' sandwiches in the school gym at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Lake Zurich? Severed heads and a giant gorilla in the basement of St. Benedict Roman Catholic Church in Chicago?" But all these and more were indeed available at mainstream religious institutions all around metropolitan Chicago, all of which shrugged off the occasional, conservative complaint. As the Reverend David Owens, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Wilmette, Illinois, noted, "The bottom line is that we recognize the terror and wonder of the spiritual world. What better place to celebrate that than in the church?" Halloween, he maintained, offered "a chance to deal symbolically and imaginatively with the terror and violence all around us."

Real-world violence certainly fueled the grassroots imagination of Halloween celebrants all across the country in 1994, when the most coveted and publicized costumes were, to the dismay of most commentators, a blood-soaked O.J. Simpson and his savagely murdered ex-wife, Nicole. When Morris Costumes, the North Carolina-based megamanufacturer of masks and Halloween gear, determined that it would be impossible to license Simpson's image, bootleggers enthusiastically filled the vacuum. Licensed or not, weird rubber masks in O.J.'s image sold out rapidly wherever they could be found, especially in Southern California, the red-hot epicenter of the Simpson circus. The manager of a costume shop in Laguna Niguel told the *Los Angeles Times* that "I've had calls about blonde 'Nicole' wigs, dark makeup, Afro wigs, big butcher knives, and, of course, the O.J. mask." Another costume vendor, in Fullerton, California, marketed football jerseys "similar to the kind Simpson wore with the USC Trojans and the Buffalo Bills—only these are splattered with fake blood and for legal reasons bear a different number," the *Times* reported.

Generic latex gash wounds, a longtime staple of costume and joke shops, were in sudden demand, and "some have even bought neck prostheses that have wounds carved into them," noted the *Chicago Tribune*.

Nicole Simpson's sister, Denise Brown, issued an immediate appeal to the public to boycott products that exploited the crime, but the media had already turned the case into the season's most sensational piece of infotainment. The demand for O.J. Halloween costumes was so intense that "Some consumers who haven't come across any bootlegged masks have settled for [any] that depict black men," including Mike Tyson and, in a pinch, even the swarthy Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

"We just want to win a few couples' costume contests and have a few laughs," one 20-year-old man told the *Chicago Tribune*. His 22-year-old girl friend hadn't quite decided if she wanted to dress as Nicole for Halloween, but was leaning in that direction. "It's not making fun of Nicole's death," she said. However, "You're supposed to bring all the horror out at Halloween." But one cannot help but question the precise humor/horror ratio of one costume concept reported by the press: a bloody effigy of the

throat-slashed Nicole, gaily reconstructed as a bloody Pez candy dispenser.

"This isn't even the sickest costume we've sold," said a Fullerton, California, dealer. "We had a couple who dressed as JFK and Jackie Kennedy and wanted to put blood and brain matter on their suits so they could recreate Dallas." The *San Francisco Chronicle* noted the 1994 revisitation of the Richard Nixon disguise, so popular in the Watergate area. Those so disposed could now go for "an updated version, in honor of the late president's passing this year: the dead Nixon mask, a grayish mass of coffin-aged skin and decayed nose." Another popular 1994 costume was Lorena Bobbitt, the infamous penis-chopper, macabrely glamorized with gleaming cutlery, and a blood-dripping sandwich bag in lieu of a designer purse.

Since Halloween has always provided an open season on propriety and authority, tasteless Halloween costumes may simply be an extension of the pranking tradition. Reports of property vandalism are fairly rare these days, but Halloween assaults on taste and sensibility are extremely common. Author/filmmaker Clive Barker, who maintains he has never worn a Halloween costume, despite his long association with dark fantasy ("The ideal Clive Barker costume would be the Invisible Man, without his clothes on," he says), shares his still-vivid recollection of a West Hollywood Halloween celebration that coincided with the trial of Erik and Lyle Menendez for the murders of their parents. "Gay men were watching the trial on Court TV because the sons were cute, and all that," Barker says. On Santa Monica Boulevard, he saw "two drag queens playing the corpses of the Menendez mother and father, complete with tombstones on their heads. They were rotting, gray, and full of bullet holes. The punchline was, they were doing this carrying bowls of berries and cream, because, you remember, the parents were killed while they were eating berries and cream. It was hysterically funny—and a complete release from the horrible, grisly, terrible reality." (Similarly ghoulish costumes with tombstone headdresses were reported following the anorexia death of pop singer Karen Carpenter in 1983.)

Barker attributes the trademark gay penchant for black humor, in part, to the subculture's recent confrontation with death and desolation in the age of AIDS. "If we can somehow play with death, that empowers us, and gives us a way to say we're not going to give in. Gay men and women have been incredibly smart over the years in using humor to take the sting out of death." He admits, however, that a travesty spectacle like the Jose and Kitty Menendez costumes tends to be more spontaneous than celebrated. "I don't think anyone's really intellectualizing when they're dressing up and smoking a joint and putting on a mask."

Nonetheless, Halloween costumes and customs still manage to speak volumes about the holiday's meaning and purpose. Barker recounts how a West Hollywood street celebration provided a personal epiphany about the meaning and purpose of Halloween, and suggests quoting from something he has already written. He retrieves the original typescript of his introduction to the omnibus edition of *The Books of Blood* (2001), describing how he, unclothed, escorted his companion David Armstrong, who had spent six hours transforming himself into an impressive, erotic gargoyle, "an amalgam of sexual excess and demonic elegance." While "watching the way people's eyes fell on my monstrous companion—the mingling of delight and revulsion—I began to remember what made me a horror writer . . . knowing the words I was putting on the page would stop people in their tracks, as my lover's curious beauty was now doing; make them wonder, perhaps, if the line between what they feared and what they took pleasure in was not a good deal finer than they'd once imagined."

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Is Rosie Kettle (Lori Nelson) listening to some slanderous gossip—about Rock Hudson, perhaps? Ma Kettle (Margorie Main) wants to know, in *MA AND PA KETTLE AT THE FAIR* (1952).

## LORI NELSON

*Continued from page 71*

were just starting out or you were hungry. Otherwise, you didn't do science fiction. I felt bad that the last movie they gave me at Universal was a science fiction film. I told them that I didn't want to do it, but they said, "Well, you're gonna do it, anyway!" So I said, "Okay," and then I left and did some TV and a couple of movies. It was hard, because it was a slow period in my career before I got going again.

**SS:** You made a number of low-budget films.

**LN:** I really didn't want to make them, either, but I made *HOT ROD GIRL*, *UNTAMED YOUTH*, and *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED*. They were three cheezy movies and you didn't do them unless you were hungry—and at that point, I was hungry. I didn't know where my next job was coming from, so I made those movies and then things started picking up. I made *PARDNERS* with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, and I *DIED A THOUSAND TIMES* with Jack Palance and Shelley Winters. I started doing TV guest shots and then I did live television—*CLIMAX*, *PLAYHOUSE 90*, *GE THEATER*, and *20TH CENTURY FOX HOUR*.

**SS:** That must have been exciting!

**LN:** And a little frightening! So things got better, but today the pictures fans remember me most for and like the best are the ones that I didn't want to do, the science fiction films. (Laughs) Well, I'm not the only one. Almost every star in Hollywood did a Roger Corman film at one time or another. *TWILIGHT ZONE*, too—everybody did *TWILIGHT ZONE*. It's wonderful! It comes full circle.

**SS:** I *DIED A THOUSAND TIMES* was a remake of *HIGH SIERRA*, with Jack Palance, Shelley Winters, and you in the Humphrey Bogart, Ida Lupino, and Joan Leslie roles.

**LN:** There was a lot of talk that Jack and Shelley were difficult. They were both temperamental, and we thought, "Boy, the fireworks are really going to spark when the two of them work together."

We were all prepared for it and, as it turned out, they kept each other in line. I don't know what happened! (Laughs) They got along famously! We all got along famously, and there were never any problems. I loved Jack! Jack and I got along wonderfully, and he helped me a great deal; he gave me pointers. Jack was a very good actor. I have nothing but fond memories of him.

**SS:** Paramount's *PARDNERS* was one of the last teamups of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.

**LN:** *PARDNERS* was probably my favorite movie, because it was so enjoyable to make

it. Dean Martin was one of the nicest people I've ever met. He was a funny man, naturally. He didn't have to work to be funny; he was naturally funny. Poor Jerry was always a pain, even way back then. He was so bossy, he wanted everything his way, and he had to work very hard to be funny. He was funny, but he had to work at it. He was always desperate to get a laugh; it was his life's blood. Dean and Jerry were always playing practical jokes on each other and on everyone else in the cast.

**SS:** Did you ever turn the tables?

**LN:** Oh, yes! In one scene, Dean was singing a song, "Me and You and the Moon," as he was pushing me in the porch swing. I had the makeup man black out two of my teeth, and at one point I turned around and smiled at Dean. Boy, did he crack up! He fell on the floor, he was laughing so hard! The crew got a big kick out of that. Then I got together with one of the stuntmen. His name was Red and he was a huge, redheaded guy. Well, we started an argument outside of Dean and Jerry's dressing rooms; we pretended Red was coming on to me and I was yelling at him. Everybody came running out of their dressing rooms to find out what was going on, and Red came at me and I grabbed him and flipped him. Actually, he flipped himself, but it looked like I flipped him. It was a great success! (Laughs)

**SS:** How were Dean and Jerry getting along?

**LN:** Fine on the surface, but you could see they were trying not to have too much to do with each other. Actually, Jerry did his best to mend the rift, but Dean

kept his distance. In fact, I was having better luck with Dean than Jerry. I was dating Dean!

**SS:** Really? Wasn't he married at the time?

**LN:** Married, but separated. We dated during the entire production, but it was kept under wraps. We'd have dinner together at quiet, out-of-the-way places. He wasn't the drinker they'd think from his reputation, at least not in those days. I finally decided that the relationship wasn't going anywhere, and I broke it off. The picture wrapped and Dean went back to his wife, Jeannie. My mother was relieved, because Debbie Reynolds' mother, Maxene, had been complaining, "I wouldn't let my daughter date a married man!"

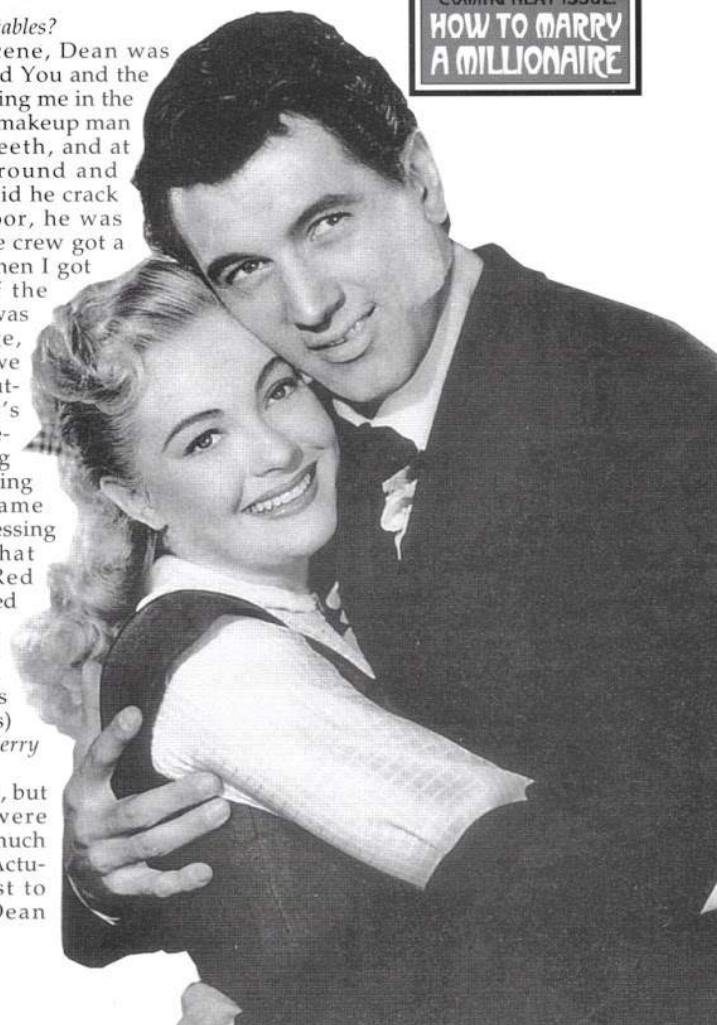
**SS:** Any other famous romances?

**LN:** Well, let's see—I was engaged to Burt Reynolds at one time. He was doing the series *RIVERBOAT*. We were together for three years, but it was a very difficult relationship because Burt was—and is—a manic-depressive.

**SS:** That's an extremely difficult and debilitating illness.

**LN:** The mood swings took a terrible toll on both of us. He was either way up there or completely down in the depths, and I went with him. When he was happy, I was happy, but when he was down—and he was usually down in those days—it was sheer hell. We came very close to marrying; we almost bought a house, and he gave me his mother's engagement ring. But finally I had to break it off and get on with my life . . .

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## SCREEN AND SCREEN

*Continued from page 68*

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The newcomer, or the casual follower of the Trek mythos, will be entertained, but will probably find the price tag a bit steep. On the other hand, these will be an essential purchase for STAR TREK junkies, who need their fix on demand.

—Robin Anderson

## BRETT HALSEY

*Continued from page 57*

with the old Technicolor three-strip camera. The camera was so big and unyielding that they couldn't move easily. When the newer cameras came it, you could see that it was going to make things easier to shoot. You were able to get outside and move around and do different things.

**SS:** You had previously been directed by Jack Arnold in THE GLASS WEB. Did he ask for you for REVENGE OF THE CREATURE or was it simply a studio assignment?

**BH:** I was just assigned to the picture. The directors had veto power, of course, with the smaller roles, but they had to use contract players whenever possible. We were all pretty much controlled. I don't mean that in a negative way. I don't think the directors could say, for example, "I never want to use contract players"—but individually they could refuse.

**SS:** Were you ever rejected by a director?

**BH:** Not that I know, but we wouldn't necessarily audition for a particular film. Sometimes we had to audition, but that was more if the studio thought we weren't capable. If we went to the audition, the director could turn us down if he thought, "Well, this kid is hopeless." But I don't remember ever being rejected. Of course, in regard to REVENGE OF THE CREATURE, it wasn't that big of an acting challenge! (Laughs)

**SS:** It's a memorable, if necessarily brief, role.

**BH:** Basically, we were just attacked by the monster. It was Bobby Hoy and I, and Bobby was thrown against a tree.

**SS:** Tom Hennesy, who played the Creature, recalled that he broke his ribs.

**BH:** He survived! (Laughs) He was a pretty good actor, but he worked as a stuntman for as long as I can remember.

**SS:** How long did it take to shoot the scene?

**BH:** We shot all night on the back lot. When I finally left to go home, I was really tired. I had all that blood and makeup on from being beaten up by the monster, and the sun was just coming up. Some of the people driving alongside of me in other cars looked at me in complete shock! I didn't give a damn; I just wanted to go home and take a shower. I didn't care what I looked like! (Laughs)

**SS:** Was the scene directed by Jack Arnold?

**BH:** Oh, sure; he directed it.

**SS:** In recent years, William Alland claimed Arnold was simply following his orders.

**BH:** William Alland, the producer? No, he wasn't there. I worked with him on other pictures, but I don't remember ever see-



Two young college boys (Brett Halsey and Bobby Hoy) find a damsel in distress (Lori Nelson), and the Creature distressing her!

ing him on the set. Jack Arnold was such a big personality that I can't imagine him allowing anyone to direct for him. He was a dancer in the beginning—a pretty good dancer, too. That's how his career in show business began. I remember him coming to one of our classes. Dance was part of our curriculum, and he showed us some dance steps.

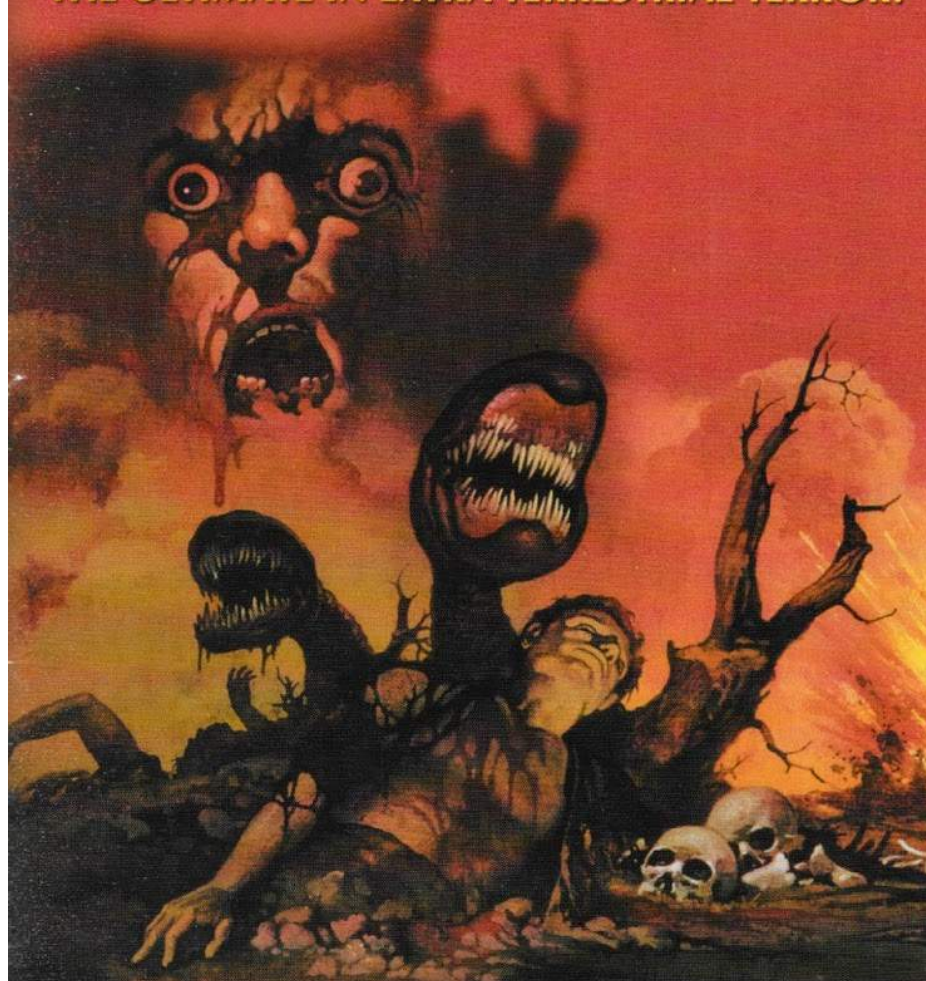
**SS:** Have you seen REVENGE OF THE CREATURE since its original release?

**BH:** No, I haven't seen it since then. It's amazing how some of these horror and science fiction pictures remain popular—not only REVENGE OF THE CREATURE, but RETURN OF THE FLY and THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE....

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LIFE





















To Dennis -  
Best of health & Happiness  
always & thank you for watching the show  
Don  
Bernie

Wes Marshall  
Deitch Studios  
1982





422-Pu 0.1









To Rodger,  
Sincere best wishes  
Lois Nelson





LN-P30













KH-P.17





























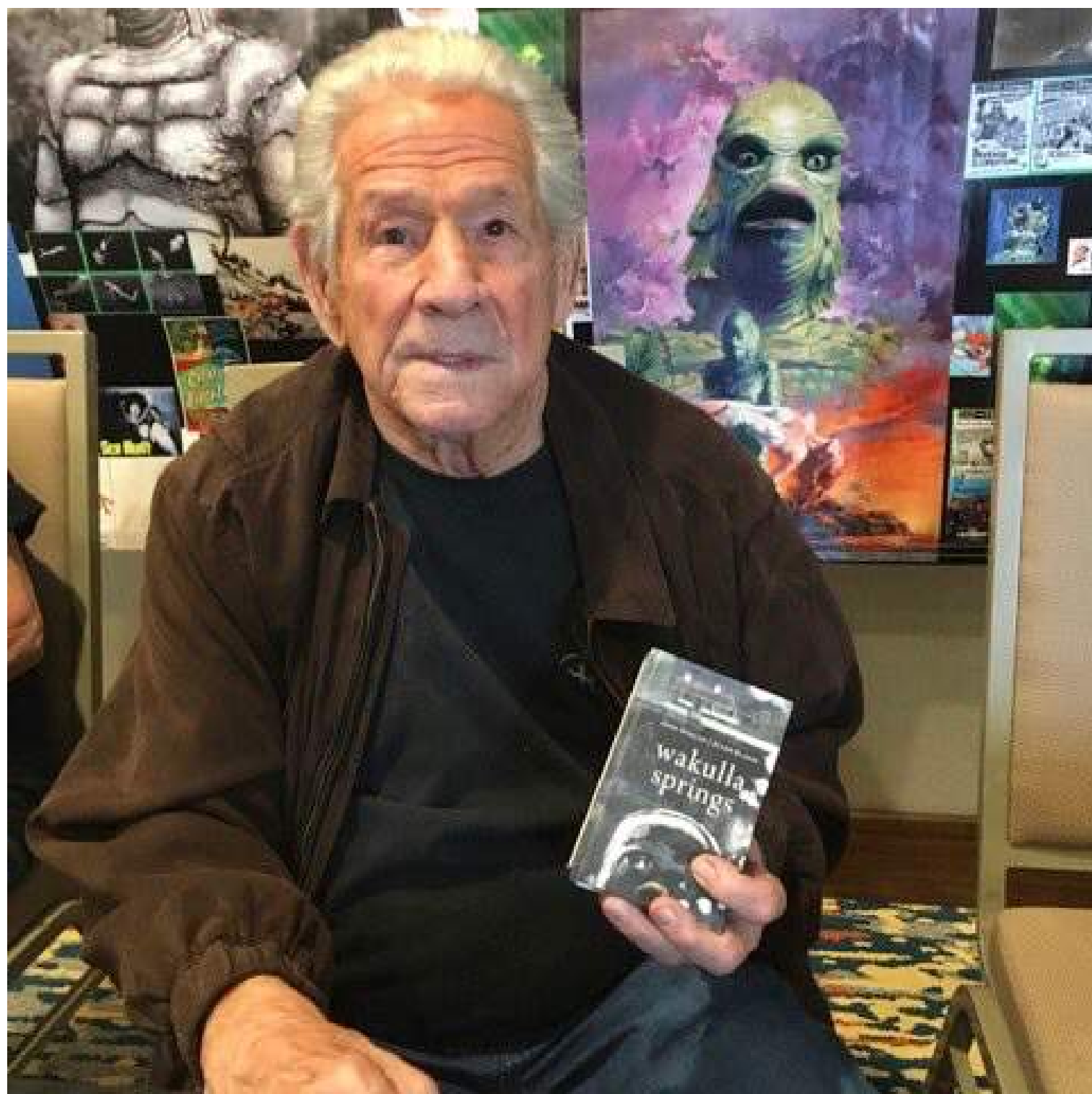






































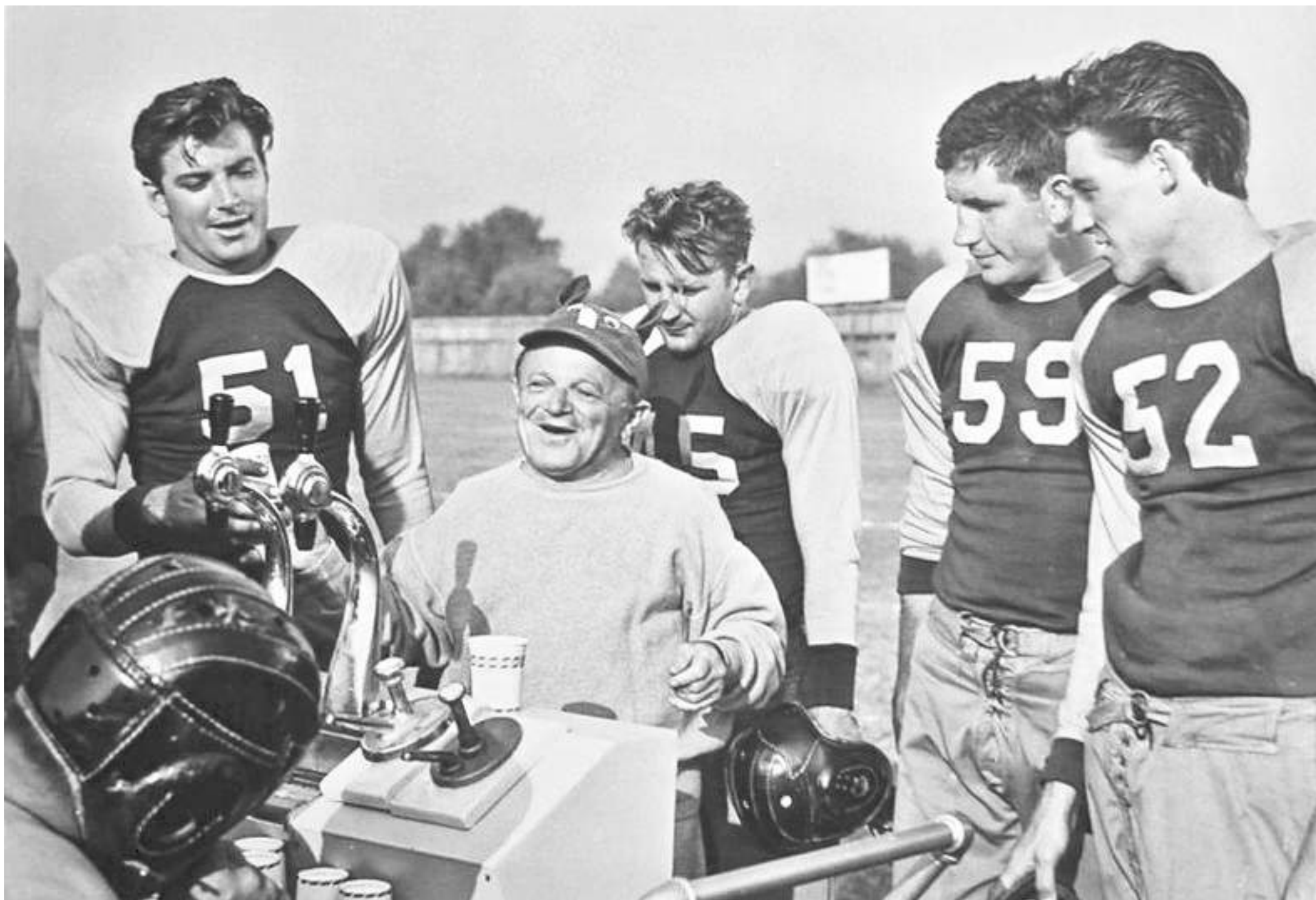
Tom Hennessy  
The Hill man

Barry Seal  
John J. Benfield



1964-1965





































































# CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

CLAWING  
MONSTER  
FROM A LOST AGE  
strikes from the  
Amazon's forbidden  
depths!

*Starring*

**RICHARD CARLSON · JULIA ADAMS**

with **RICHARD DENNING · ANTONIO MORENO** · DIRECTED BY JACK ARNOLD · SCREENPLAY BY HARRY ESSEX AND ARTHUR ROSS · PRODUCED BY WILLIAM ALLAND

A UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL PICTURE













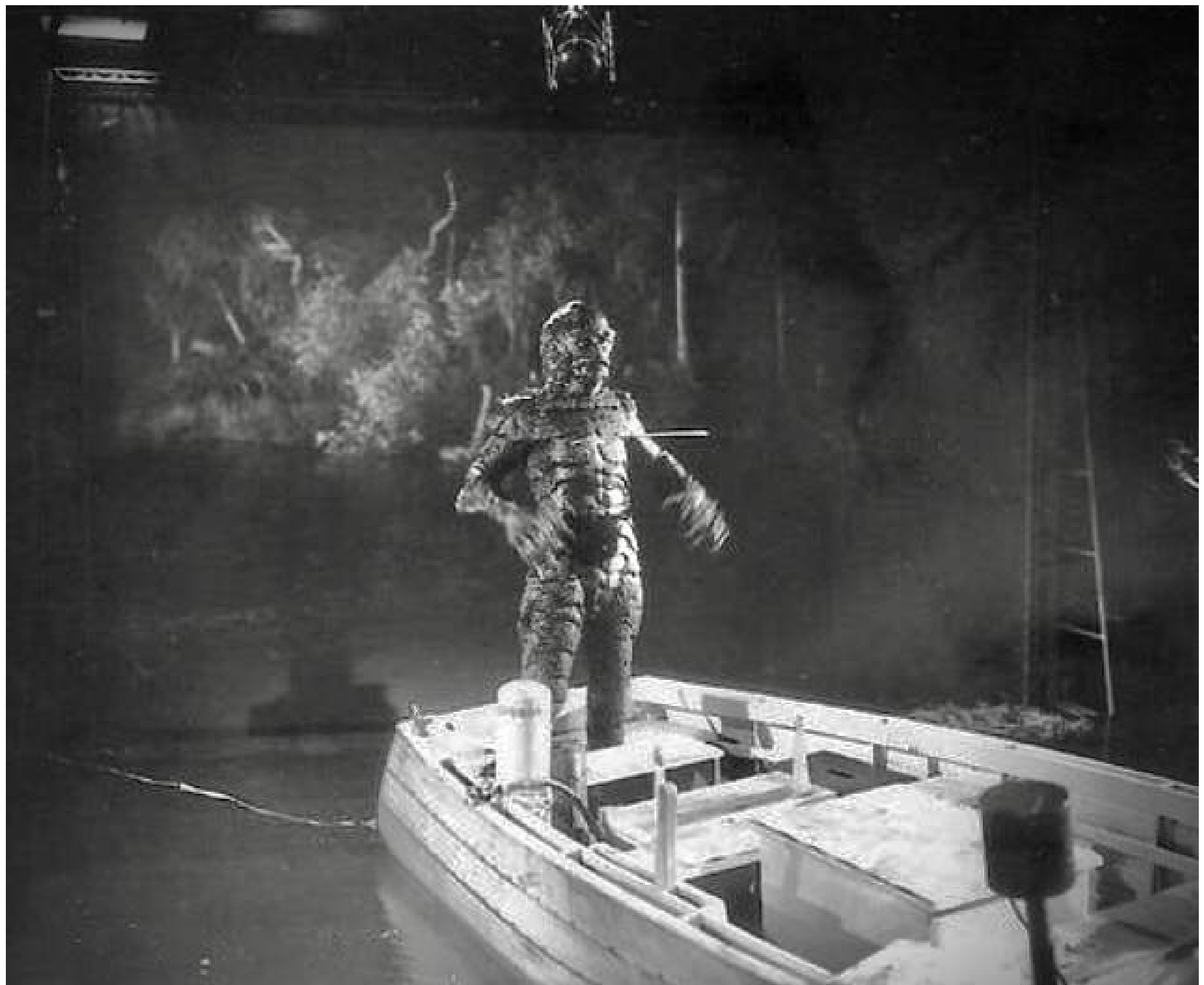




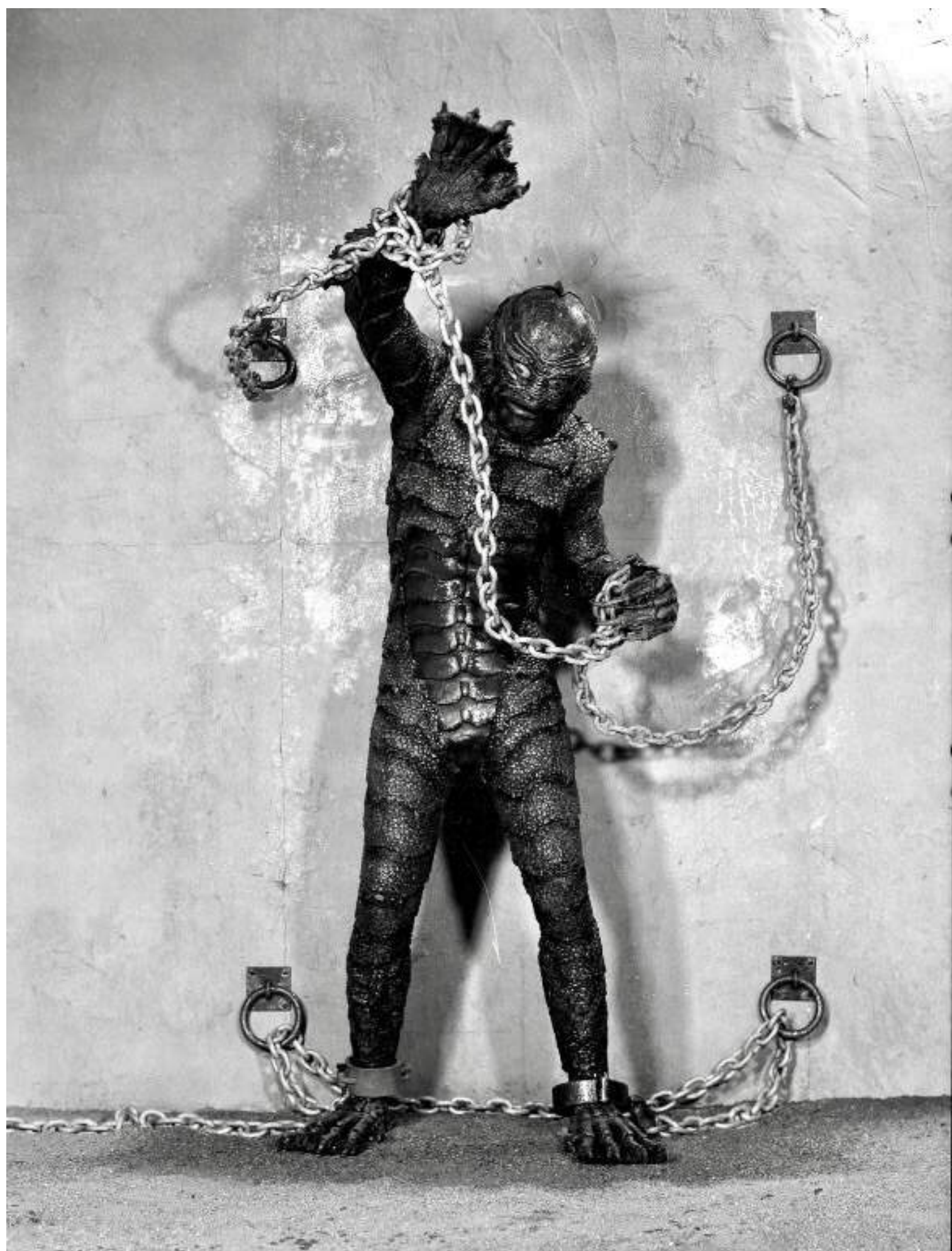


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**JOHN AGAR** **LORI NELSON** **JOHN BROMFIELD**



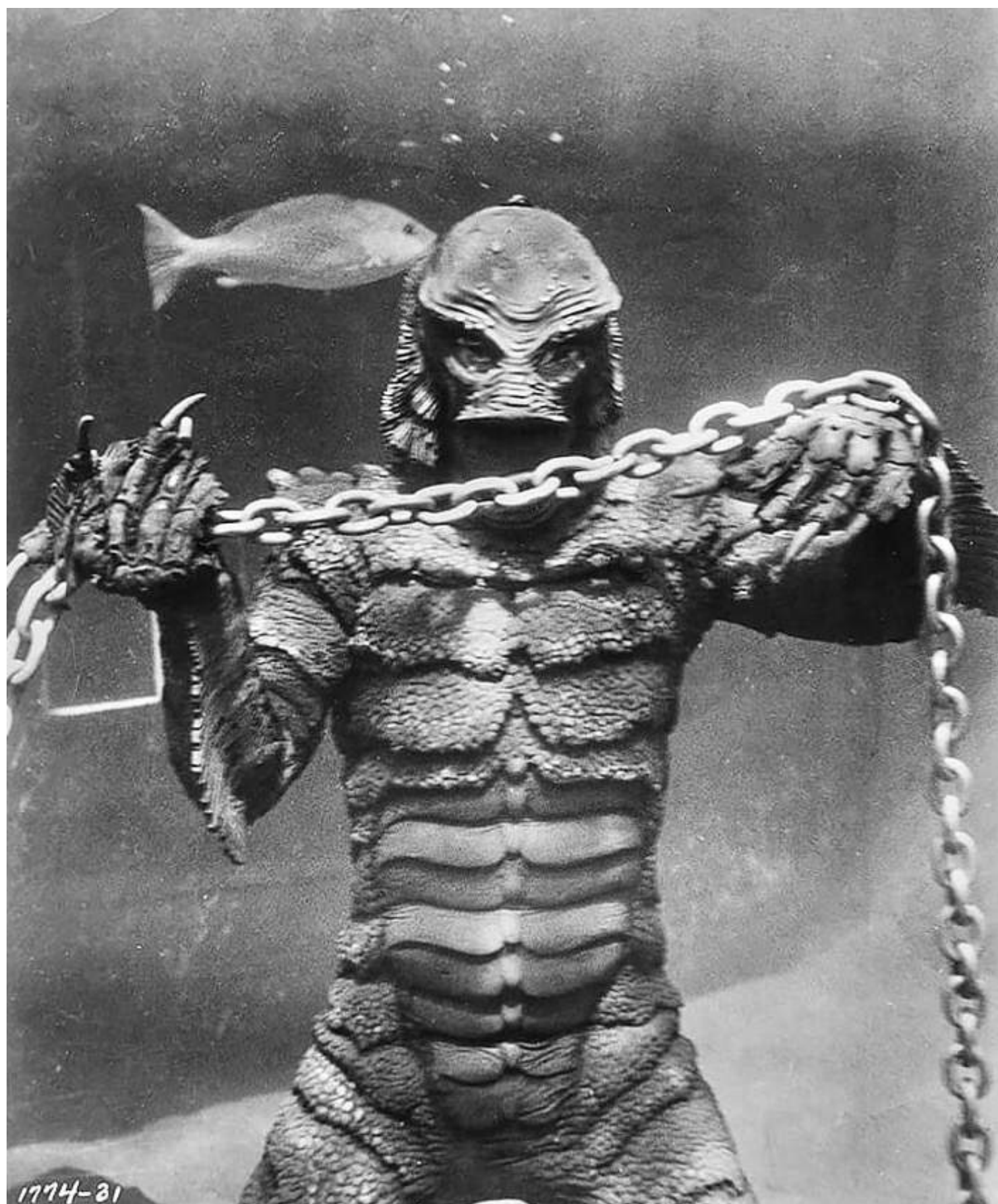
# LA VENDETTA DEL MOSTRO

**NESTOR PAIVA** • Regia **JACK ARNOLD** Sceneggi **MARTIN BERKELEY** Prod. **WILLIAM ALLAND**













1774-16





1810-8nd









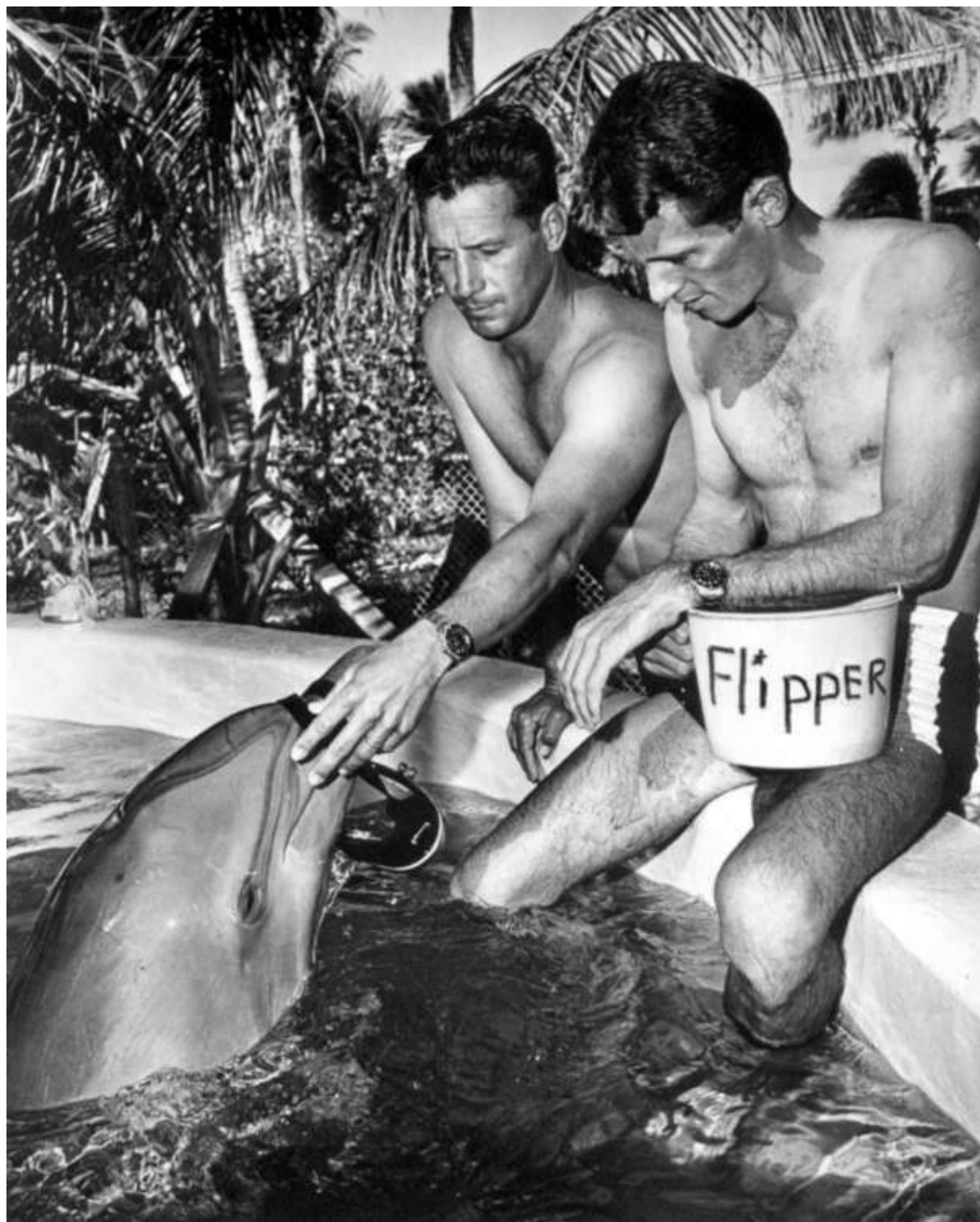


















Good bye

Kevin Brown!









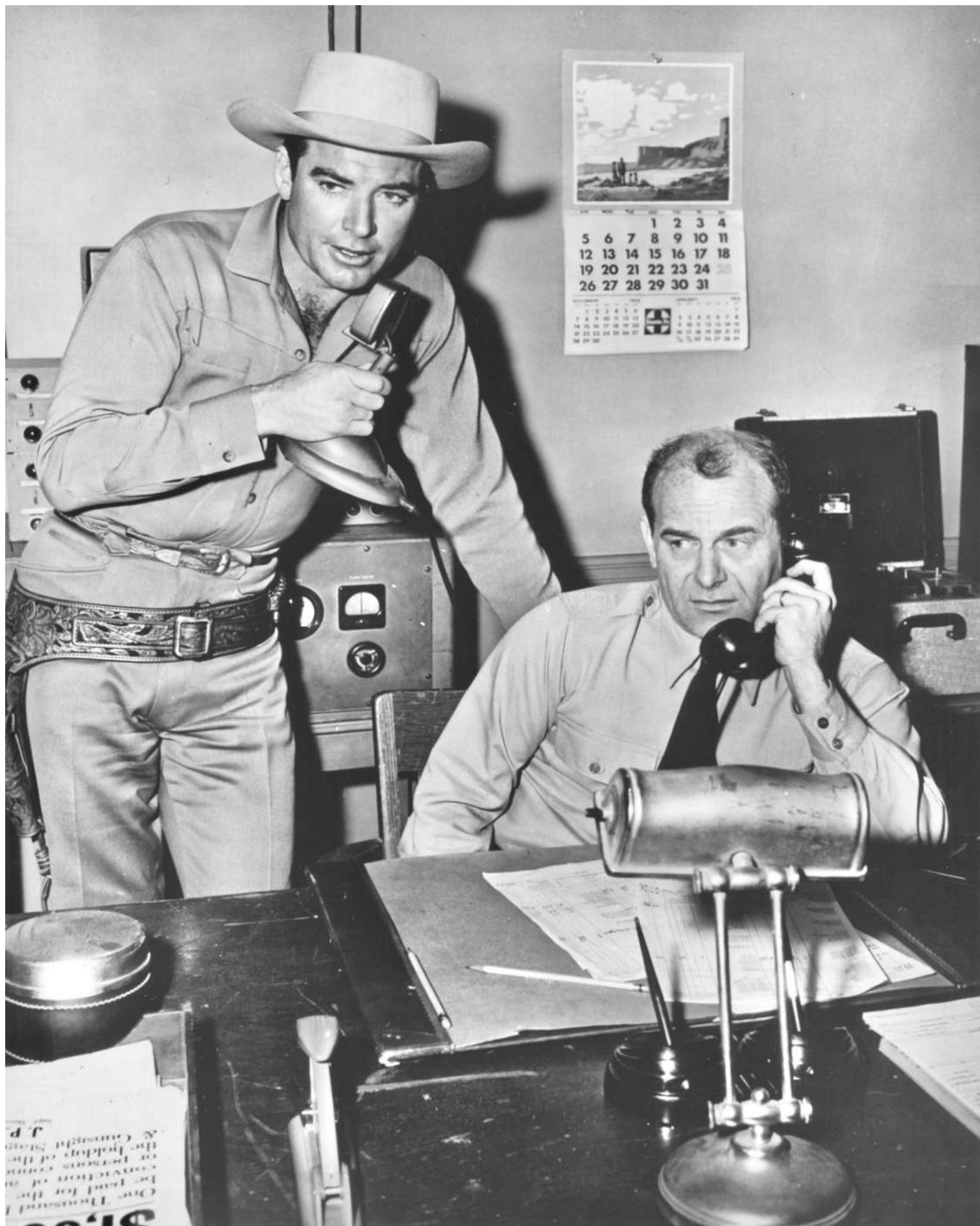
















TCW-2









BR-L-2A













1774-22









































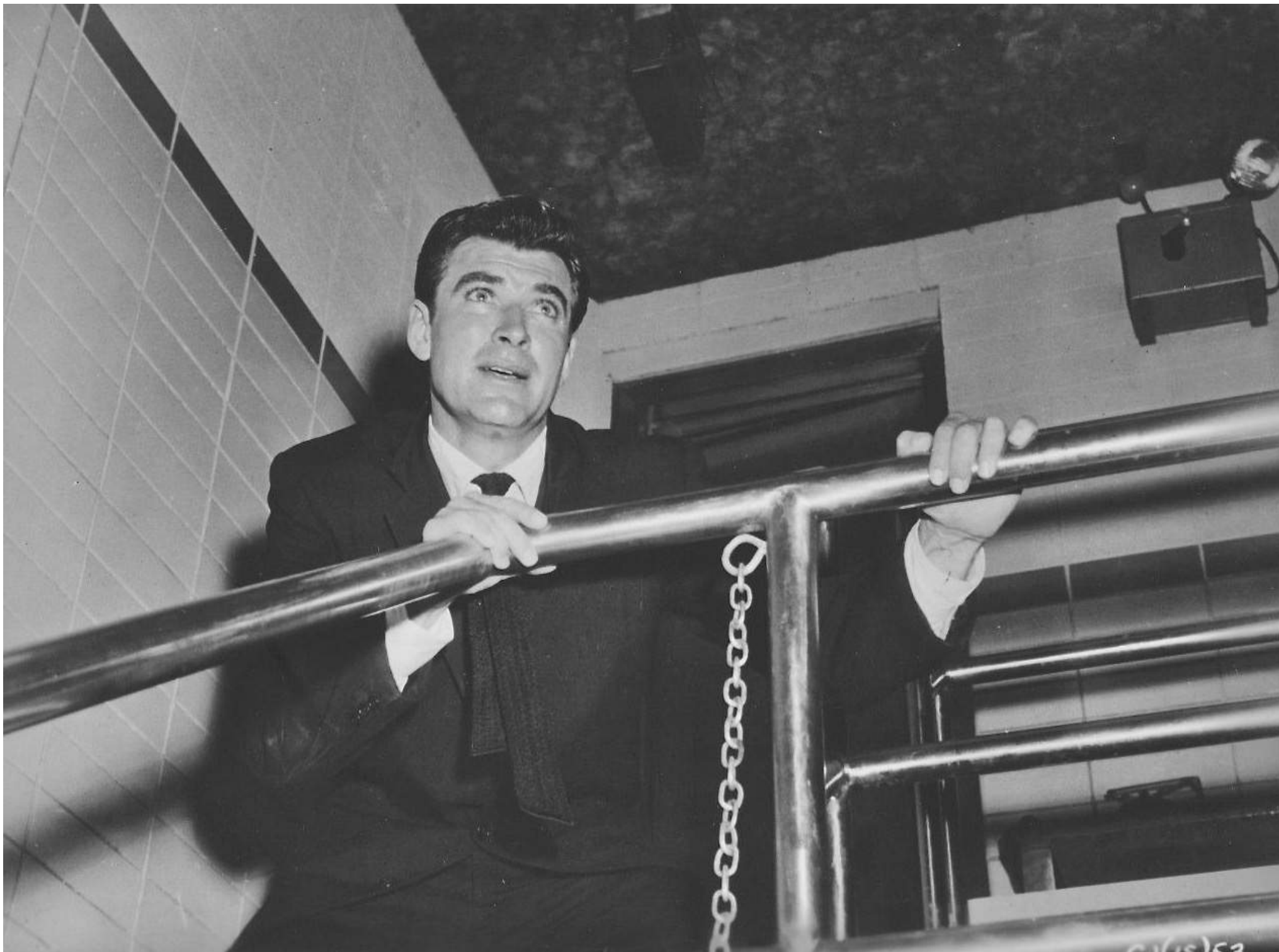












































1644-P9























